

THE

WANDERING PATENTEE;

OR, A HISTORY OF

THE YORKSHIRE THEATRES,

FROM 1770, TO THE PRESENT TIME.

VOL. II.

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WANDERING PATENTEE;
OR, A HISTORY OF
THE YORKSHIRE THEATRES,
FROM 1770 TO THE PRESENT TIME:

Interpersed with ANECDOTES respecting
MOST OF THE PERFORMERS
IN THE THREE KINGDOMS, FROM 1765 to 1795.

BY TATE WILKINSON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

To which are added, never published,
THE DIVERSIONS OF THE MORNING, AND FOOTE'S TRIAL
FOR A LIBEL ON PETER PARAGRAPH.

Written by the late SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

" *Smith.* SO YOU WRITE ON, MR. BAYES?
" *Bayes.* AY—AND SO LONG AS I KNOW ALL MY THINGS
" ARE GOOD, WHAT DO I CARE WHAT PEOPLE SAY.—AND
" IT SHALL PIT, BOX, AND GALLERY IT, 'EGAD, WITH
" ANY BOOK IN CHRISTENDOM."

Duke of Buckingham's Rebearsal.

VOL. II.

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WANDERING PATRIOT;

OR, A HISTORY OF

THE YORKSHIRE THEATRE,

FROM 1770 TO THE PRESENT TIME;

TOGETHER WITH A HISTORY OF THE

THEATRE IN THE THREE KINGDOMS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

BY TATE WILKINSON.



VOL. II.

YORK.

PRINTED BY J. H. COOPER, STATIONER, &c.

AT THE YORKSHIRE THEATRE, ST. JAMES'S STREET, YORK.

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1844.

THE
WANDERING PATENTEE.

MR. JOHN KEMBLE (now acting Manager of Drury-Lane Theatre) made his first appearance at Hull in the character of Macbeth on Friday Oct. 30, 1778; next he acted Archer, which was not unlike his manner of playing *airy comedy* now. He, from soon getting well connected at Hull, and from his merits rising daily as to reputation, aided by strong imagination, and a *nerved understanding*, it may easily be supposed soon gained popularity and attention, on and off the stage. I should like to see Mr. Kemble in Horatio, it must be a manly, noble performance; his Sciolto, perhaps, not so good; but Lothario better let alone.

I am here chatting on Theatrical matters, and mean not the least offence to Mr. Kemble; a gentleman whom I must, in compliment to myself, not be such an oaf in observation, did I not feel, acknowledge, and admire his superior talents.

Volume II.

B

Mr. Kemble, though in particular characters, where sternness is requisite, more than in the tender passions, certainly is HIMSELF ALONE, and almost unexceptionable. For to say Mr. Garrick or Mr. Barry were divested of error or peculiarities, would be saying more than truth, though nature had been lavish to the latter;—but when I see Mr. Kemble kneel to his mother in the third act of Hamlet, and *kiss her hand* (or neck, if he can reach it,) with all the enthusiasm of filial love and duty, my idea of propriety is somewhat staggered, though the acting is superexcellent, when in a short page he refuses to accept any token of love or filial affection from his parent. But I am here out of course as usual, always going out of the road instead of pursuing the right track, consequently I have got into the mire and am all besplashed, while my reader is staring and with wonder reflecting where Mr. Air-castle has got to; for certainly, instead of mentioning Mr. Kemble as to what he is now in 1793, I should stick to what he was doing in 1778?

Why, in the course of that year, he acted Lord Aimworth, *without songs*; and perhaps his performance was not the worse for that omission. I must observe, that he was not the only instance of such a strange opera undertaking; for Barry and Mossop, when “The Maid of the Mill” was

in high repute, aided that musical performance by each, as rival opera performers, at their different Theatres of Crow-Street and Smock-Alley, by acting the character of Lord Aimworth; and I never heard it decided for the honour of either, which was the best. To the credit of Mr. Kemble I must mention, that he undertook the character, not from whim or choice, but to assist a brother actor on a benefit night.

I must not omit a melancholy accident or circumstance which unfortunately occurred the season 1777 or 1778, at Hull, on the evening the tragedy of Charles the First was acted; a part which Mr. Cummins supports with much firmness and strong display of character; and as far as we can judge by dress and manner, he exhibits to imagination a very picturesque and strong resemblance of that unfortunate Monarch, as far as portraits and writers can assist our ideas as to person, the which leads us to reflect on the awful and fatal catastrophe. A young lady of the name of Terrot, (daughter to an officer of that name, then quartered at Hull, and I believe still living) the darling of her father and mother, was sitting in the stage-box at the representation of the tragedy just mentioned, and in almost a second after the play finished, she dropped down dead, to the great grief of her family and her

numerous friends. Various were the opinions on the fatal summons, some urged that the melancholy of the tragedy had affected her senses: The enemies of the theatre were certain it was Divine judgment, as a punishment for being in so profane a place as the devil's house, without making the least allowance that a church has often been subject to the like dreadful visitation with an allotted death chamber of repose: However it had such an effect and weight on the auditors' spirits, and the opinions at Hull, that I think the play will never be acted there *by desire* again. If Captain Terrot and his lady are living, it is not I believe in Yorkshire, as I was informed that gentleman requested to be removed to a place where the memory of a beloved child would not be so often intruding on their minds from particular incidents and occurrences, which would unavoidably be the case with hints of the dreadful catastrophe.

For something less melancholy permit me to change the doleful subject, and entertain the reader with a less important affair, which is merely, that in the season of 1778, the Sadlers' Wells Company, Richer and family, were again engaged, but did not succeed much, and what is worthy remark, those entertainments when produced at Hull are seldom very popular with the galleries.

Mr. Kemble on Tuesday December 29, presented the town on his benefit night with a tragedy of his own entitled "Belisarius;" which was received with candor, credit, and applause.

My career of scribbling has been suddenly stopped by an unexpected and disagreeable visitor, Mr. Gout; who has not entered my territories by any means like a civil or humane victor, nor shewing me the least clemency, but has chained me by both the heels, so that I cannot run away from him. My citadel, the Heart, has taken the alarm on the occasion, but though intimidated, must repel the invader; and my senses summoned, collected, and submitted on mature deliberation to the judgment of the court of Reason, candidly do confess, that I much fear the said spoiler might by degrees extend from the town of Foot to the village of Knee, and from the village of Knee, to the city called *Caput*, where the materials are very slight for defence, and from that surround my capital the Stomach, and from thence invest and bombard the citadel my Heart; I therefore by the help of forces well paid for, assisted by stout repelling Madeira, have as well as in my power encircled all the roads and environs with strong fortifications, to prevent attack or encroachments from the foe, and for the present will (if I obtain victory on this first invasion) proceed with all

tolerable caution: But perseverance tells me, with so many inlets by which I may be assailed, and the works evidently falling from the hand of Time into decay, which no human foresight can repair, so as to repel the arrows of Death, I can only oppose my now feeble strength, and trust to lucky chances to procrastinate what I cannot prevent; at the same time, mustering philosophy, patience, courage, and resignation, and having gained a little victory over the fallen foe, for the present, I will proceed with my book in the account of 1778, in order to get my task finished, lest the curtain should suddenly drop on my maimed performance, and shut me out from my family and friends, with all the ills and intermixed ingredients of life; and as Acasto says,

“An old man must expect these little shocks of Nature,

“They are gentle hints to warn us of our end.”

Mr. Kemble, on his appearance at York, soon made way, but not rapidly; for the public will have favourites of their own: Instances of which I have often seen and observed, that by setting up a new favourite only rivets another set as determinately hostile to any new favoured rival; and not unlike a Democrat or an Aristocrat, reason is not consulted. I remember desiring a servant of

mine particularly to see the play of Hamlet, and he would not stir from my house to the theatre: After some interrogation of mine, why he did not attend the theatre, he said it was "because Mr. Kemble played Hamlet." "Well," says I, "and he plays Hamlet excellently well." "That may be, Sir, but I am sure I could not abide to see Mr. Kemble play Hamlet; you know, Sir, it is Mr. Cummins's part?" And in the million there are more such critics than can easily be imagined, created from want of judgment, spleen, envy, partiality, obstinacy, and a thousand *et ceteras*.

Mr. Kemble's first appearance in the York Theatre, was on the 19th of January, 1789, in the formidable Prince Orestes: A quarrel at the rehearsal, relative to which side, P. S. or O. P. for Orestes to make his entrance in the 5th act, to the jealous great Priam's daughter, Hermione, was combated strongly by the Prince and the Princess; however the hero conquered the heroine; and he preserved his situation, more from a shew of superiority and knowledge, I believe, than as to any real opinion being material to Mr. Kemble as to either, P. S. or O. P. I was chosen umpire, and I believe perplexed the controversy more than settled it.

For my friend Inchbald I got up the play of "Bonduca," as altered the preceding summer by

Mr. Colman, in which I undertook the part of Caratach, and my son JOHN, then only nine years of age, the child's part of Hengo, which had been so well sustained by young Edwin in London. I need not say that my boy was well received and cherished, as all audiences on such occasions are ever liberal to the first start of endeavour, and wish to give stability to the tender sapling.

At that period my limited time was expired for paying back my three thousand guineas, which I did, by obtaining different subscribers at Hull and York, at one hundred guineas each, with a free transferable ticket, and legal interest, with the privilege to pay off when it suited my convenience, by which means each subscriber got more than tolerable interest, and I got my liberty, and free from the galling chains of thirty proprietors; which would have required a much wiser head than mine, and more philosophy, good sense and resignation than falls to the lot of many ever to have satisfied: In short, it was impossible; and I have blessed God from that day to this, for my comfortable deliverance from such a bastille. For I grieved, yea I truly grieved, and was sore in spirit: And indeed the following specimen will prove how irksome it must have been to have had my property and livelihood at the mercy of such a despotic convention.

To overcharge 55l. 10s. paid to Mr. Rofs, to make up the deficiency of his benefit, which was only 24l.—Charge Mr. Wilkinson £ 55 10 0

(My agreement specified was half the receipt, which explains itself)

To the sum overpaid Mr. Wilkinson }
on his benefit at York, being one }
half of the usual allowance for the } 2 10 0
expences of the house, Mr. Wilkin- }
son having received one half of the }
full receipts }

To the like at Leeds 2 0 0

To the like at Hull 2 0 0

Total, 62 0 0

The 19th day of Jan. 1778, stated and settled these accounts.

R^d. J—S.

JOHN W—T.

EDW^d. C—H.

GEO. S—L.

It needs no comment: Therefore no wonder if I gloried in having got rid of my bondage; and when freed from shackles, I triumphantly, in January 1779, marched my veterans and new raised troops into York city: Myself once more enthroned with royal state, and in idea of self-importance uncontrollable behind the curtain, unless indeed now and then summons'd to order.

by the murmur of the audience before the curtain, which served to waken me from my delirium.

“To hope for perfect happiness is vain;

“And pleasure ever has alloys of pain.”

Though seriously speaking, I do not think it possible ever to have a manager more watchful to entertain and provide new matter to cultivate and improve their appetites for theatrical dainties; and the reason is obvious, for the public cannot be more fond of variety than I, their manager, am——

“Who, as their caterer, provide them dishes,

“Just to their taste, and season'd to their wishes.”

Mrs. King expected that season to be received as usual, but caprice and fashion had founded the *toctin*, for retreat, and she was neither attended, admired, or done common justice to.

Mr. Kemble's second appearance at York, was, by his own choice, Ranger: His third, Edward the Black Prince. In many passages of that character, he made the audience feel his great propriety and sterling merit. His benefit was his own tragedy of “Belisarius,” on Saturday, March 27; which was well received, and his interest and reputation deservedly on the increase.

The Sadlers' Wells company, Richer, &c. were again engaged, but with little success or approbation.

To oblige my friend, General St. Leger, I once more engaged Mrs. Hunter, for a few nights; a lady to whom he was much attached: Her success was not remarkable, but a lady of manners good, and as a companion at chit chat truly sensible, entertaining, and engaging; but she had rapidly fallen off in figure, stage-manners, voice, &c. to what she had been. So no wonder the London audience did not like her the previous season; when in truth we may without offence conclude, that playing a winter in London, with such opportunity, with observation assisted by common sense, should have improved, not deadened her faculties. I am sure even now, I always think my imagination improved whenever I get a few weeks in London: But then I am a Cockney, naturally like London, and may flatter my self-conceit. But partiality apart, I rather believe I am right; and in all arts every mind must be improved by often viewing that vast scope for observation and excellence which London affords; and the London audience is the only one where respect and attention is preserved for their favourite performers. Dr. Johnson thought he saw the whole world in London. Audiences in genera are capricious out of London, whe-

ther in Great Britain or Ireland; but in London an actor and actress are received in characters of youth, that in the country would not be endured, however formerly excellent. There the bud of beauty must be ripening on the peach, and the bloom must be inviting on the plum, and look firm for the taste, but will never succeed with a high tinctured cheek, that with full ripeness melts and yields to the touch.

Mrs. King's benefit was entirely neglected, as if by general consent, though she, three years previous, was the darling of the York public: Her play was Mr. Glover's "Medea," Saturday, Feb. 27, 1779, a piece then followed in London from the admirable exertions of Mrs. Yates; but the word *fashion* had left Mrs. King; and how mortifying and unexpected such a fall and change! what a lesson for vanity or dependence on public opinion! for she wastruly in disesteem because she was not fortunate—and came back again, where she expected fond reception.

"As, in a theatre, the eyes of men,
 "After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
 "Are idly bent on him that enters next,
 "Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
 "Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
 "Did scowl on Richard. No man cry'd, God save him!
 "No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home;
 "But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;

- “ Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,—
“ His face still combating with tears and smiles,
“ The badges of his grief and patience,—
“ That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel’d
“ The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
“ And Barbarism itself have pitied him.

Mr. Kemble presented Mrs. Hunter, for her benefit night, with a piece called “ The Female Officer,” of which I do not retain the smallest remembrance: And I believe, as to that circumstance, the author, now with the affairs of state he has upon his ministerial shoulders, retains little more recollection of its merits or demerits than myself.

Thursday, April 13, 1779, produced a serious matter of disturbance, and from a trifling cause; which too often sets real states at variance, and good men into quarrels: For my own part, I am of Lord Hastings’s opinion,—That a civil rebellion in church, state, the stage, or in public or private, is dangerous, disagreeable, and full of peril; and when in the midst of ease, plenty, and pleasure, Discontent may rear its head, infuse its baneful poison; like a plague, there is no knowing where its direful and dangerous projects may end, too probably in a sudden chaos of famine and every danger and destruction that the infirmity and diabolical wickedness of human nature, aided by evil agents, can devise, and un-

fortunately for mankind, put into hellish practice the horrors of war, plunder, and murder.

JANE SHORE.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

Hastings. “When shall the deadly hate of faction cease,
 “When shall our long-divided land have rest,
 “If every peevish, moody malecontent
 “Shall set the senseless rabble in an uproar,
 “Fright them with dangers, and perplex their brain;
 “Each day with some fantastic giddy change?
 “Have we so soon forgot those days of ruin,
 “When York and Lancaster drew forth their battles;
 “When, like a matron butcher’d by her sons,
 “And cast beside some common way, a spectacle
 “Of horror and affright to passers by,
 “Our groaning country bled at ev’ry vein;
 “When murders, rapes, and massacres prevail’d;
 “When churches, palaces, and cities blaz’d;
 “When Insolence and Barbarism triumph’d,
 “And swept away distinction; peasants trod
 “Upon the necks of nobles; low were laid
 “The reverend crozier, and the holy mitre,
 “And desolation cover’d all the land.”

However right or wrong I may be as to judgment, I am sure I shall not be set down as wrong, either as manager or actor, when I declare for the olive branch ever blooming in mine and every theatre, and what is more devoutly to be wished,

in every state and kingdom throughout the moving globe.

Mr. Murphy's "Zenobia" was appointed for Thursday, April 15; purposely for the introducing a Mrs. MASON in that character, who, full of self-fame, came post from the north of Ireland to slay our tragic princesses in Yorkshire, by dint of a superior force of arms, charms, &c. She was certainly destitute of voice, variety, and powers; yet strange to relate as a fact, I have heard this expressive-inexpressive, all-alike-dull-featured-crack'd-voiced heroine has been preferred at Halifax to many of established merit: However, be that as it may, the lady was not so fortunate at York; and the boxes will often smile, when the actors groan in reality.

On that fatal night, a lady of family, well known at that time, was present; her name was S * * * * * e, possessed of strong sense, and with that a most poignant turn of satire, and never curbed her laugh when she chose to be in the comic vein, whether it was tragedy or comedy. Two circumstances occurred to make this night unfortunate: Miss S * * * * * e possessed the stage-box, and had her beaux to talk and laugh with; she unluckily took a sudden antipathy to the new tragedy-heroine, and never failed on her appearance to shew her great disapprobation, by the strongest marks of contempt and ridi-

cule. From some unaccountable partiality, she had also adopted an opinion greatly to the prejudice of Mr. Kemble, who acted Teribazus; so that in the last act when Mr. Kemble and the lady were fully employed in the agonizing scenes of death, Miss S * * * * * e, to satisfy her satirical vein, gave such way to her impetuosity of temper and spirits, that she really, as Lady Townly says, "talked (and laughed) louder than the players." The new actresses not having made any favourable impressions, so as to gain the hearts of the audience, was left destitute of all support, and certainly appeared to every disadvantage, by receiving such apparent and discouraging treatment, as might have damped the courage of Mademoiselle Cordé. Mr. Kemble being not a little nettled at Miss S * * * * * e's pointed rudeness, (which certainly did not reflect honour or credit either to her family or herself) in the last scene conveyed looks of disdain (of which he was and is capable) to the lady, which looks were as scornfully returned with reiterated bursts of laughter. On the repeated repetition of such injurious and indelicate behaviour, Mr. Kemble made a full and long stop, and when at last called on by the audience to "Go on! go on!"—he with great gravity, and a pointed bow to the stage-box, said he was ready to proceed with the play as soon as *that* lady had finished her conversation,

which he perceived the going on with the Tragedy only interrupted. This called up the roses into cheeks not the most remarkable for being feminine or delicate; and fury, indignation, and lightening flashed from her eyes: The audience were roused from their stupor, and in general hissed the lady in the stage-box; and several voices cried, "*Out! out!*" This was treatment "horrible most horrible" for a lady who prided herself on family more than fortune, (and whose spirits at certain times were under the controul of the moon.) She could not bear such an unexpected insult, either from the audience or the player. She summons'd most of the officers, gentlemen of the North-Riding Militia, who were assembled at York, and unluckily, I may almost say, in the theatre, for they obeyed the lady's commands in a body, and came to my house, which adjoins the theatre, and with one voice commanded Mr. Kemble into their presence.—I said it was an unfortunate accident to the audience and the performers; I had not any doubt but Mr. Kemble would immediately appear before them, but at the same time begged leave to hint, that Mr. Kemble had the education and the principles of a gentleman implanted on his mind, and therefore wished, if they looked on Mr. Kemble as a good actor and an acquisition to the public, and me as the manager, to consider, that if they offered

lordly language or authority to him, he would not submit to any ungentlemanlike degradation, and we should only suffer a mutual loss : They urged an affront to a lady from a performer, so insultingly given, demanded reparation. I waited on my friend, Mr. Kemble, prepared him for the purpose, and left him to be directed by a judgment much superior to my own. When he entered my dining-room, the officers seemed peremptory and warm ; Mr. Kemble was cool, deliberate, determined, and not to be alarmed by threats or numbers ; after much altercation, it was concluded, that instantly an explanation should be given, to reconcile the matter to them as the defenders of the lady and the audience. The officers returned to their former stations in the theatre, and at the end of the overture they called on Mr. Kemble. The audience in the interim had laid their *nobs* together, and concluded, on mature deliberation, that matters were carrying, that greatly intruded on their rights, that Miss S*****e was a constant disturber, and the officers wanted to degrade Mr. Kemble, for only having acted with the spirit of a man, and they did for *once* allow that an actor might *feel* when insulted on the stage, at least equal to those off——

“ And the spurs that patient merit,” &c.

struck their ideas forcibly : Therefore, when Mr. Kemble appeared, the pit and galleries cried out, "No apology! no apology!" The boxes insisted on Mr. Kemble's being heard, which at last was unanimously agreed to; and he stated with great calmness and precision the state of an actor so disagreeably circumstanced, and was proceeding with great justness, propriety, and elegance, in an extempore and honourable defence of the stage, which making against the opinion of the boxes, they cried out, "We want none of your conversation or jabbering here, it is very impudent and impertinent; talk no more Sir, but instantly ask pardon." Mr. Kemble, with face erect, voice distinct, pride manifestly hurt, and with expression equal to his best line in Coriolanus, full of disdain, firmly said—"PARDON!—No, Sirs!—*Never*"—and left the stage with bursts of approbation from the audience: The heroes were left planet-struck, but no one more or half so much disappointed as the queen of the quarrel; for Miss S*****e expecting with great exultation, pardon from the *insolent* actor, turned pale and sick—and enraged left the theatre: The boxes found it a vain struggle to call for Mr. Kemble again that night to make reparation; and they left the field of battle, not as conquerors, but as the vanquished party, breathing revenge: For we seldom, when

prevented in our views, either of ambition, pleasure, justice, or injustice, take the even scale to weigh any matter that may probably make against our own self-love and pride of superiority, when reigning over inferiors.

Perhaps the reader will conjecture, that cool reflection, and not any play from Thursday the 13th till the Saturday following, would have produced salutary effects. But as the Player King observes——

—————“ we often see, against some storm,

“ A silence in the heav’ns, the rack stand still.”

So though all seemed calm in the interim, yet a violent storm arose on the Saturday. The audience in general, and Kemble’s friends judged, that those who are deemed the quality were too overbearing, and, *per contra*, the other party could not suffer the idea of an actor not being subservient in every respect: An opinion in general predominant out of London, unless with those who take the trouble to really think and judge of men, and weigh circumstances with an impartial hand. The play was “Percy;”—Kemble acted Douglas: A party in the boxes, not expecting opposition, and assured and determined to carry the point and chastise the insolent actor, on his appearance cried out, “Pardon, pardon!” But John Bull had made good several determined

friends of the public, and all Kemble's acquaintances were scattered in every part of the theatre—the boxes not by any means without his partizans; the result was, that the attack of pardon and humiliation that was instantly expected from Kemble, was entirely drowned by a vociferation of voices not to be overpowered, by such a salute of applause to Mr. Kemble, as would have sounded well in a London Theatre.—Then again—again—and so called for with increasing plaudits for six repeated thunderers, as quite astonished his opposers; and reiterated applauses accompanied his performance to the finish of the play. I believe his antagonists, who were actuated from pride, not reason, were heartily glad when Earl Douglas died; and I dare aver, Mr. Kemble found it a very pleasant death. But sorry am I to relate, that all did not end here, more gentlemen were summoned on Thursday, April 20th, which immediately followed: The play was “Macbeth,” in which character I figured away, but was called on by several officers and gentlemen betwixt the acts, relative to Mr. Kemble. “The Toy Shop” was to be acted after the play, in which Mr. Kemble personated the Master of the Toy Shop: I convinced them that Mr. Kemble would not suffer degradation on his part, his situation in the York Theatre was not such as to make a sacrifice worth attention; he would ra-

ther lose profit than reputation; he had no property at stake that the hand of Power might either revenge by neglect, riot, or disturbance; and hoped those considerations would weigh with their reflections and determinations. Dr. Burgh, a gentleman of highly polished abilities, guided by strong judgment and discernment, and full of regard to Kemble, came round I remember on his part to soften and relax if possible the determined mind of Kemble; so by this means, and General St. Leger assisting me as mediator, (who was luckily then in York) but of course on the *gentlemens'* side. (For that is often the case in regard to the poor player, consequently he cannot boast always of a free and unbiaſſed jury, and therefore cannot have the same *large letters* for his liberty as an Englishman, though we can puff them sometimes in a play-bill. The French Convention talk loudly of the liberty of the press, that is provided the writer favors of their own exalted notions; but let him write ever so well, and only mark error on their proceedings, and the honourable *guillotine* is his lot, or a rotten dungeon at best the reward for his talents, however distinguished.) In consequence of these manœuvres, when the Toy Shop began, Mr. Kemble of course was once more called upon before a large party: He claimed a hearing, without which he could not submit to be con-

demned; but if in the recital, any gentleman or set of gentlemen would assert in that character, that he had acted unworthily, he would willingly and cheerfully make any reparation they should judge proper, assuring himself, whatever they desired could not but be honourable and truly consistent with justice, and such as would become him to give, and them to accept. This hint of Mr. Kemble's was agreed *nem. con.* On which permission to proceed from the audience, he expatiated so properly, and with diffidence on every point, that his judges were captivated—reason took place—he was acquitted with three cheers, “*Not Guilty*”—and I believe had not one dissenting voice in the Theatre.

Miss S * * * * *, I must observe, was not there; she was certainly the aggressor, injured intentionally, and therefore of course the reader may be assured, that she never forgave; that is a rule too true, and I believe has been and will be from the beginning to the end of the world.

This brush over, Mr. Kemble increased in fame and popularity; for honest minds overheated at the time, and such as are true Britons are never more happy when convinced they have run into any excess of either error or cruelty, but if really gentlemen, on consideration, are happy when they can make more than ample amends from the overflowing of a good heart, which had

been a little tinged and sullied with gall, but returns once more to its native clear spring of purity and steadiness.

Early in May, 1779, Dr. Hunter, (who has been indefatigable in plans for the public good at York, and to whom the kingdom at large is indebted for that excellent institution, the York Lunatic Asylum) patronized a play for that laudable charity.

To encourage the relief given at the Theatre on that occasion, Mr. Kemble, at the desire of Dr. Hunter, wrote the Prologue: The same month Mr. Kemble wrote another Prologue for the benefit of the Leeds Infirmary; both have great merit and elegance, and may be found in Mr. Kemble's Fugitive Pieces, printed at York in 1780.

Mr. John Kemble's strength of imagination and faculties, makes me compare his *observatory* with that of others, *similar* to the *difference* of a large elegant house and a snug little one: in the latter you have conveniences it is granted, but it requires neat management from want of extension to properly arrange the intermixed materials: Now the first mentioned habitation is so various and capacious, that, when properly attended to, there is a cabinet or cell, without the least trouble, to assort every little matter as well as great, all which may at ease be collected and called forth

at the will and pleasure of the lawful master;—and even so are Mr. Kemble's cloisters and chambers of his brain.

I have noticed that errors in acting, frequently arise from two causes,—too much encouragement, and too little; but more frequently from the latter, as the want of warmth and culture, nips the bud and chills the root; but the one sometimes is almost as dangerous as the other. Few actors of great promise improve whilst in the country, after they are once in their opinion firmly fixed as to their own ideal fame: For the applause in a theatre is frequently mistaken as the sentiments of the whole circle; and, on the other hand, two or three dissentients are taken (by the alarmed struck actor) as a token of general disgrace. To say a favourite performer in London would act so, would be allowing too much; but he must there be more cautious: for if possessed of understanding, when in that metropolis, the actor well knows gain as well as sterling fame are both depending. In the country the audience look very coolly on the players in a comparative degree, and treat them, in opinion, not as stage artists, but dependent stage bunglers; and each country town looks upon their own equality with that of any other, without once considering size, situation, or trade; on the contrary, each expecting precedence, like children

when they quarrel, the one says, "I am as good as you:" "Well," says the other, "and I am as good as you." I remember Mr. Garrick in a great pet, one evening when he acted a principal character: The theatre was very thin till near six, when they came in crowds from the overflow at Covent-Garden, occasioned by the performance of one of Rich's pantomimes, when Garrick repeatedly muttered with great discomposure (and with truth) that "the grown children were disappointed of their puppet-show, and would not be in good humour all night;" which was a fact, for I well remember they did not applaud. Garrick was as much mortified behind the curtain, as the greatest child could be before it: Which proves a London audience and a London actor are not always divested of childishness, any more than we on our rural excursions.

Certainly much has been (and may be) said against prepossessions and youthful impressions, and such observations are attended with great truth in many cases, but I think I never was or am blind and obstinate in allowing the merits of our present superior performers: and though I recollect exquisite acting from Mrs. PRITCHARD and many others in the first comedy line of characters, yet I cannot recal to my mind's eye, such fashion, ease, pleasantry, and elegance, in the captivating coquette and the lady of fashion

all conjoined, as when I view the alluring, the entertaining, the all-accomplished Miss FARREN; and I cannot surmise that the severest old critic, or the slyest young one, can truly confute this, or instance such another Lady Paragon, Mil- lamant, Emmeline, &c.—Good actresses may put in their claim, but that face, with the domains that there adjacent lie—in short, the *tout ensemble* is not to be equalled: if I am wrong I am sorry for it: but to resign my opinion of the Farren, *pardonnez moi*.

Now Mrs. Clive must have deserved that reputation which she held without a rival for fifty years, no doubt to her right of claim to prove it; as she neither possessed youth, beauty, good person, good humour, education, or strong understanding: But nature was so lavish in natural genius, as to render those valuable materials never thought of; and she made Flora in *The Wonder*, equal in the estimation of the audience, to the superior characters of Felix or Violante.

Woodward had altogether the most elegant proportioned figure; and when displayed and saying, (as Capt. Flash) “Look at me now, Miss! “What do you think of me now? *damme!*” I do not know an instance of the sort nearly equalled. But after all this prittle prattle let me close the season at York on Saturday May 10, 1779, with the Fair Penitent: Lothario, Mr. Kemble;—

Horatio, Mr. Cummins;—Sciolto, Mr. Wilkin-
son;—Lavinia, Mrs. Hitchcock;—Calista, Mrs.
King; which was judged, taken for all in all, to
be above mediocrity for a play out of Lon-
don.

As that concluded the season, I must now treat
myself with an interlude out of time and place,
lest I should forget the dish of oddity, if deferred;
and though the following letters were wrote to
me in the autumn, 1792, yet they will be as enter-
taining in the history of 1779.—It will to some
readers, perhaps, be whimsical to read two or
three epistles from ladies and gentlemen, who
recommended themselves for the stage without
any one requisite or idea, excepting impudence
in the extreme. The first was from two ladies
(I should suppose of the washing-rub) demanding
an engagement for “Two Gertele Laddys of
Famaly born and bred at Newcastle upon Thyne;
they did not chouse to hackt at that Plese caus
of disgrecing *there* Rich Relitions They intends
to Plae Lady Tonoly Lady Tesle Monimiar Ca-
listar and all the *l*den Characktars,” &c.—
To this application a refusal followed of course.
Here follows an exact answer from the enraged
ladies, with no less than six wafers to secure it
from the unhallowed inspection of the post-boy;
as thus



" Mr WILKINSON

" Sir wee reseived yours and am suprifed of the answer you made ous I whould have you to know that we whould not wrought to you If we had not Beene Capeble of under takeing that Line of Life I thought proper to Wright By return of post to let you know that If we had camd to your company that we whould have Been a Cridet to your Ladyes By our abblitys

New Castle
Tusday

" So no more from yours

" WALPOLE and BONER."

A few days since I received this from a stage struck hero, who professes himself a proficient.

" SIR

" With oute offence to yow i wish to Write yow as follows having had the plesure of preforming Diffring Carracters in ireland takes the Liberty to adrefs My Self to yow if yow Can Comply with My Request is thatt i would wish to Engage with yow for the insuing Seson in hull if yow Can Exept of Me yow May have a triel Gratis for what tiem yow think proper as i never had anney Engagement with anney Mannegr But Gave My time Gratis if yow will Exept Me on theas terems ill wait yowr arivel in twom or ill Engage for one year or two for what fallery will be most a Gre-

abel yowr Self as My inclynation Leads Me thatt way i am a Native of Dublin and yow May have an undeniebel Carrafter of Me &c &c

“tis Requfit for Me to inform yow what parts i have preformd is Shylock Sr petter &c &c Lingo Derby Gregory and jobson and many others Perticler trish and Baldy in the Gentel Shepard

“Write When Covenant and yow will Much obligh yowr humbl Sert W. GRAY Driett me W. Gray att Mr. Bottemly Scale Lane

“N. B. tis not all to Geather for what Emoliments arives But the Grate Desire and athathemnt theatt i have for the stage and Never had the oppertunety till Now to Make an adrefs”

Now if this has made my reader laugh, it may have served by way of a Sandwich in the road from York to Leeds; where we arrived, but not completely, for I had some desertions: The principal was Mrs. King, who finding Mrs. Inchbald (the beautiful) gained interest in the hearts of the public and the feelings of the manager; and that she had lost that ground and fame she had once sustained with so high a head,—taking Mr. King by the hand, she determined on a more private station, as the post of honour. He and Mrs. King therefore left all royal roofs, but gave me notice not to quit their posts of duty till the end of Doncaster season, in October 1779, when they

would try a safer shore: At the expiration of the appointed time they enlisted in the Lincoln company, where for a short space she flourished; but, on repetition, the benefits began to fail; the company was neither good, fashionable, nor well attended. By playing at Lynn, several inhabitants noticed and admired their private worth, punctuality, and integrity; and the principal families there proposed to Mr. and Mrs. King, (what was much wanted there) an established boarding-school for young ladies; they both possessed good education; Mrs. King wrote an excellent hand, and in point of behaviour, with the advantage of a commanding person, good understanding, experience, observation, punctuality, and the whole attended with neatness and regularity, gained ground on all those minds to whom she was introduced and conversed; and having experienced the fickle turns of life in and out of a theatre, she lost no time by hesitation in adopting and accepting, with thanks, so generous and eligible a situation. I believe this might happen about the year 1781. The new scheme succeeded beyond expectation, and so much to their credit and comfort that some years after, I shall meet and introduce them to the reader in a flourishing state, as the conductors of the minds of youth. No task can be more difficult, honourable, or satisfactory: It is a praise every parent bestows

with energy and gratitude, and the instructor has a right to indulge a little vanity, where the praise is the result of observation and the deserved tribute to the painful task of tutor over the male and female mind —.

- “ To rear the tender thought,
- “ To teach the young idea how to shoot,
- “ To pour the fresh instruction o’er the mind,
- “ To breathe th’ enliv’ning spirit, and to fix
- “ The gen’rous purpose in the glowing breast.”

If I have been prolix and too frequently alluded to Mrs. King, I beg the reader to consider the great footing she was once held in as an actress in Yorkshire.

My memory hints, that about this time, or most probably some four or five years earlier, the interim between York summer assizes and the races 1774, the company tried the success of a trip to Harrogate under their own government.

Mr. Moody was engaged, after his playing at York, on a visit to Sir Rowland Winne, at Nostel, who at that time professed the greatest friendship and esteem for Mr. Moody; the latter wanted to satisfy his curiosity by seeing Harrogate, and naturally at night attended the theatre on the opening. Not any regular company of players had then ever acted at Harrogate, and the beginning at any stated hour was so little thought of, that the

audience never went till the play ought to have been almost over : However punctuality was the foundation laid by the York company, as the only honourable means to ensure and establish success. The performers were all prepared at half past six, the fiddlers played " Britons, strike home," the bell was rung, the curtain drew up, and Mr. Powell entered as Ranger, *actually frightened* on beholding Mr. Moody seated in the pit, as the only auditor in the whole theatre, either in "box, pit, or gallery," egad." Mr. Moody felt awkward, and the whole company went through their several characters with great propriety, but all more frightened than chagrined from the oddity of the situation, till relieved by some kind guests, who expressed their surprise at half past seven, at not only finding the play begun but half over. It proved a lucky circumstance; for that regularity procured the company respect, attendance, and success during their short stay. Mr. Butler, now the manager, perseveres in the most praise-worthy exactness that any first theatre can boast, and the consequence is success and public approbation.

This evidently shews that certain actors may sometimes have the effrontery to stand the shock of some body and every body; yet here is an instance of their modest diffidence and delicacy;

as they were all panic struck and frightened by *no body*.

Another trifle to offer the reader is, to inform him, that my intimacy with Mr. Macklin about 1770, received a little check from his hearing of my freedom with his property, by the acting of his darling farce called "Love A-la-Mode;" and in consequence sent me the following interdiction; which with extracts instead of whole letters will give a strong conception of the mode of his mind, and if not interesting, yet from so remarkable a genius and venerable understanding, may afford entertainment from the novelty.

(EXTRACT.)

"DEAR SIR,

"When propriety concurs with a request to me, no man I believe has more pleasure in assenting to it; none more regret in refusing when impropriety says I ought to dissent. No lover can be more jealous of the favours of his favourite, than I am of the stolen pleasures of my muse's favourite, "Love A-la-Mode." You have invited me to York in the Whitfun-week, I have told you that my forecast for next winter has so engrossed my mind and time, that I could not, without a probability of hurting my design, detach either from that pursuit: Yet I may, perhaps, notwithstanding take a trip to York in

Whitsun-week, provided it should fall in with your wishes. I say, perhaps,—for even then I cannot determine. Should I meet you there it would not be prudent that Love A-la-Mode should be acted before. But whether I go or not, I will not consent to have it acted on the occasion you mention, or any other, and therefore I am sure you will not permit it. I am sensible that several companies act it; and the reason why they have hitherto done it with impunity, was because I was in Ireland: but now I am returned, and shall settle here, depend upon it I shall put the law against every offender of it, respecting my property, in full force.

“I will tell you what, in most likelihood, would induce me to York, your telling me what sum, certain, you would insure me for so many nights: Much or little give me your thoughts on it.”

“DEAR SIR,

DUBLIN, *May 5th, 1772.*

“I am obliged to you for your kind note and invitation, and am satisfied fully with your integrity concerning Love a la Mode. Should you have a leisure hour at any time and would call, I shall esteem it as a favour. I would do myself the pleasure to wait on you, but am confined by a particular application to a little piece I am preparing for the stage.

“I am, Sir,

“Your humble servant,

“CHARLES MACKLIN.

“P. S. Can you dine with me to day?—if you can, send me word, and come without ceremony;—and pick up a second, third, or fourth person, and bring them with you.—But send me word immediately,—the hour four.”

In consequence I introduced Dr. Wallis, (who was at that time with me in Dublin) and another friend to Mr. Macklin, from whom we received a hearty welcome, and spent a very entertaining, cheerful, happy day.

(EXTRACT.)

——“Leeds I am told has too much methodism to be pleased with the passions of a Shylock or a Richard, though in imitation only.

“If it may be made worthy of your interest, &c. to see me upon your stage at the races, I shall, about that time, be in London, and at leisure to attend you. I say worth your while,—for that ought to be your first policy in agreements with such birds of passage as we Londoners are.”

(EXTRACT.)

——“You higgles and higgles too much about an agreement with me, and talk of thirds and halves of houses as Jews (Shylocks) do in Change-Alley about fourths, eighths, and sixteenths. I know

nothing of halves or thirds of houses, nor of charges of houses, nor half charges: You know them all and the receipts, as far as experience can inform; and you can likewise judge how far you want my assistance, and how far my acting can assist and profit you, much better than I can judge: Therefore you can say what your receipts or market, and your interest can afford to give me for the service you expect: Let me know that: I will give you an answer; and if your sum (for it must be a sum, and not any thing upon chance) be worth my while I will attend you; if it be not worth my trouble the treaty ends at once.

“The business I propose to do with you at York is Macbeth, Richard, Merchant of Venice, Love A-la-Mode, Miser, perhaps Othello;—I say perhaps. So that you see the whole point rests now upon your telling me what certainty your interest—I say your interest—will give my labour.”

(EXTRACT.)

——“My play was read twice, but for a private reason I have suspended it. The Lord Chamberlain has refused to licence a comedy of mine, being seasoned too high respecting venality: and the other I have withdrawn, or rather suspended.—O! I said so before.”

(EXTRACT.)

—“ I am about to agree with the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre; nay, indeed, the great outlines of the agreement are settled, and both parties seem very willing to come together; so that the probability, in a high degree is, that the matter will be finally adjusted in a compact.”

(EXTRACT.)

LONDON, Nov. 1779.

—“ I wish you would, in legible characters, and plain, clear, common sense, let me know upon what terms I may play with you at Edinburgh. I shall have a new farce or two, and a new comedy, with the London stamp of appro- or disapprobation upon them, to offer to the Edinburgh audience; before which I have, sincerely, the warmest inclination to appear: For, *sans* compliment, I think that the purest, that is, the correctest audience now of the empire. Dublin, perhaps from national partiality, or fair candour, may be on a par with them, for the body of the law there, as at Edinburgh, are the bulk of the audience; and sure that is the most sensible part of an audience, if not of the nation.

“ Bad houses at both Theatres.—Henderfon has not had half a house yet—*all the American war*.—Did I not say so it would be?”

(EXTRACT.)

——“I am about to settle, in my annual vacation from business, in some remote town or village for life. The qualities I look for are plenty of sea-fish, coal, and cheap,—a conversable few neighbours,—a good house, at as small a rent as can be had,—nothing mean—but all cheap—*compared to London*: And as air is a dish that Nature, and her favourite, Health, delight in, that is a favourite object: West Chester, and Beverley, in Yorkshire, are in my contemplation: You know the materials I seek thoroughly—think and advise me. Three months in London will do my business, nine in the country. I have (to oblige the manager entirely) brought out my piece that was the True-born Scotchman in Ireland, when acted there; here it is the Man of the World: The low and vulgar Scotch, the low and envious critics, the methodists, and some ignorants, attacked the first night, but it made its way to the end, which was crowned with applause; announced, with all its fins upon its head, without a dissenting mark that I heard. The second night, about six vulgar Scots in the gallery attacked it, a battle ensued, the English, Irish, and Welch, were full ready for such things you may imagine, they were beat, turned out;—a Scotchman, who gave the first blow, was, for the assault, sent to the round house,—bailed next morning before a

justice—begged for mercy—the gentleman granted his prayer,—but on condition that he asked pardon in the Morning Herald twice, which he did as an example to such low Scotchmen; his name *James Steward*; a royal name, renowned for attempting to destroy the liberties of this land. Ever since, it has gone off as the author would wish: next Monday the last day—Boxes all taken,—yet I will not play it another night upon any account.”

(EXTRACT.)

——“Your caution, your reasoning, and your determination upon the consequence of actors to themselves, and on the precariousness of a public respecting their going to see them in your part of the world, is very just on your side, and is a good hint to an actor not to over-rate himself when he means to visit your region, nor to venture his fame or his labour, where there is a doubt whether he shall be approved of or followed.”

Before I close my trait of Mr. Macklin, I will mention my dining with him a few years since at Mr. Moody's; the conversation turned on imitation, when my good old acquaintance, Mr. Macklin gave his opinion strongly against it, at the same time mixed his severity with compli-

ments (not often the case); but he ever honoured me with his partiality and every act of kindness. I made no resistance by way of argument, for that would have made it the morrow following, as Mr. Macklin never is averse to contradiction, argument, and a fair hearing. In an hour after the conversation on mimicry had subsided, I was talking of the lucky chances which frequently occurred on the stage from being unexpectedly happy in a particular character.

Macklin. "You are right, Wilkinson: I recollect an instance of my own good luck from such a fortunate circumstance. I do not think I ever pleased the audience or myself more to our mutual satisfactions, than when I first acted at Drury-Lane Theatre, the character of Justice Shallow, in the Second Part of Henry the Fourth. Sir, I was masterly, and stamped my reputation from that night's performance."

Wilkinson. "Well, Mr. Macklin, and can you inform me whether it was the effect of chance, or study and design, that occasioned such distinguished approbation?"

Macklin (pausing.) "Chance! study! or design!—Ha! *attention*, Sir, and I will tell. I had collected my materials all from Colley Cibber, Sir, that great actor of Nature, and that character, Sir, was his masterpiece."

Wilkinson. "Why not an hour since, Mr. Macklin, you were severe on the talent of imitation, and now you say that was one of your best acted characters."

Macklin. "Sir, you are fatirical! How is an artist, however able, to attain the height of reputation, as the first painter, Sir, but by study, strict attention, observation, and application in viewing the first masters? Without these models he never can; without such assistance ever, (with reason) expect to arrive at perfection, but with genius will sink into mediocrity."

Now as in former years I was a dabbler that way, I will not take up any time with a dissertation how far that sort of genius, as to mimicry, may be defended or decried. It is whimsically described by Mr. Boswell, in his Life of Dr. Johnson, which shall here follow, and is worth inserting, as we find it a strong proof that the wisest men have at different times different opinions on the same subject, and are now and then apt to waver in their decisions, like weaker heads.

"*Boswell.* Foote, Sir, has a great deal of humour?"

"*Johnson.* Yes, Sir."

"*Boswell.* He has a singular talent of exhibiting character."

"*Johnson*. Sir, it is not a talent, it is a vice ;
" it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy
" which exhibits the character of a species, as
" that of a miser gathered from many misers ;
" it is farce, which exhibits individuals."

"*Boswell*. I gave him an account of the excel-
" lent mimicry of a friend of mine in Scotland ;
" observing, at the same time, that some people
" thought it a very mean thing."

"*Johnson*. Why, Sir, it is making a very mean
" use of a man's powers. But to be a good
" mimic, requires great powers, great acuteness
" of observation ; great retention of what is ob-
" served ; and great pliancy of organs, to repre-
" sent what is observed. I remember a lady of
" quality in this town, Lady — — —, who was
" a wonderful mimic, and used to make me
" laugh immoderately. I have heard she is now
" gone mad."

"*Boswell*. It is amazing how a mimic can not
" only give you the gestures and voice of a per-
" son whom he represents, but even what a per-
" son would say on any particular subject."

"*Johnson*. Why, Sir, you are to consider that
" the manner and some particular phrases of a
" person do much to impress you with an idea of
" him, and you are not sure that he would say
" what the mimic says in his character."

"*Boswell*. I do not think Foote a good mimic,
" Sir."

“*Johnson*. No, Sir: His imitations are not like. He gives you something different from himself, but not the character he means to assume. He goes out of himself, without going into other people. He cannot take off any person, unless he is very strongly marked; such as *George Faulkner*. He is like a painter, who can draw the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who, therefore, is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg, *Foote* can hop upon one leg. But he has not that nice discrimination which your friend seems to possess. *Foote* is, however, very entertaining, with a kind of conversation between wit and buffoonery.”

I could here have inserted, with truth indisputable, various instances of *Mr. Macklin's* rigour, tempered with justice and clemency, and more particularly his steadiness of regard and friendship, intermixed with great hospitality and generosity; but by saying more I fear my prattle would be tedious, wearisome, and heavy.

Speaking of one remarkable character naturally leads to the thinking and speaking of another; much about the time I have been here endeavouring to entertain my companion with a sketch of *Mr. Macklin's* letters and extracts, &c. I received the following laconic letter from *Mr. Foote*.

"DEAR WILKINSON,

"I have a project on foot, in which you can be of infinite use to me and yourself; you know me well enough, to be convinced that you will have nothing to fear in point of advantage; the character for you is wrote, and the time wont admit of delay; set off for London directly, but come to my house, we can provide for you; I would have your being in town a secret at first.

"Yours sincerely,

"SAM. FOOTE."

From such slight materials persons may readily conceive the difference of manners and whim between a Mr. Macklin and a Mr. Foote. For a strong resemblance of Mr. Foote and Mr. Garrick, as to manners, peculiarities, &c. I think I may affirm a good drawing will be allowed in my Memoirs by those who remember those gentlemen in the habits of intimacy: No person a better or more acute judge than Mr. Murphy.

The reader will recollect for me, as I have strayed out of my *ir*-regular path, that my register was at Leeds in May 1779, where Mr. Wood, Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock again left me—(Mr. Wood has oftener left his Yorkshire quarters and me and returned, than any performer I ever recollect)—Mr. Colman of the Haymarket was the tempter, and they obeyed his summons for the

season, and returned in September, on the close of Mr. Colman's theatre.

Mr. Kemble persisted on making his first appearance at the Leeds theatre, in Hamlet; a point generally allowed, where the performer makes a particular stress on the custom; and Hamlet, I believe, is oftener seized on, without the least mercy to blank verse, than any other character, by the flying sons of the buskin, and murdered with more cruelty than Madam Lamballe was by the French mob. However, Mr. Cummins having played the part of Hamlet several seasons, with great credit, and being an established favourite of the audience, as a man and actor, in every part of the circuit, suffered himself to be very uneasy. I attempted to palliate, and wished to persuade Mr. Kemble to some other character, but that was preaching to the winds; he persisted, and of course acted the part, and it is almost unnecessary to say with approbation. Not that his Hamlet was then what it is now, as in some of the passages, particularly in the third act, Mr. Kemble is now equal to any actor I ever saw, and in select passages superior.

Elegance and ease of deportment was Mr. Garrick's great merit in that character, assisted by the finest eye ever seen on a stage; at the same time I recollect, that Mr. Kemble's eye is marking, in stern passages; but for quick flashes of

fire and variety of conveyance, Garrick was certainly the only man, whether he had gone to act a play at court, either on his ass or lolling with a Lord in his chariot,—of which dignity Mr. Garrick was foolishly fond, and saying—"Well now, Hay, are you all well: but I can't stay now at your rehearsal, for my Lord Edgcomb is waiting in the carriage for me."

Now it came to pass when Mr. Kemble's acting of Hamlet was over, the serenity of my friend Mr. Cummins returned; we were all good friends as ever, as it had never been. These little broils and heart burnings are inseparable from behind the curtain, as broils (from causes as trivial, will present themselves unexpectedly and without cause for murmur) sometimes before it.

Arrangements being tolerably settled, we proceeded on a jog trot, peaceably and unmolested, at Leeds Theatre, where there are not many families who make the theatre more than a place of entertainment for their leisure, and in general are not so neglectful of superior and substantial views, as either to caress and invite theatrical gentlemen and ladies into familiar intercourse; nor on the other hand, to interfere with their ridiculous disputes, of *consequence* or of *unimportance* only to the players themselves.

My particular intimates at Leeds, then and since, were confined to very few; for a man who

lives freely every day, regularly or irregularly, with a constitution far from strong, and the multifarious occurrences and changes as unexpected as the wind and weather, will not afford a manager leisure to constantly dip into the mixed hours of conversation at public houses. Indeed, I have been too often blamed at some places for not being sociable; but if any thinking mind will reflect and look back at my being my own master from seventeen, habituated from custom (a strong law) to London, Dublin, and Edinburgh hours, a great deal may be said for its being almost impossible for me, after a good late dinner, with wine and well-fed turkey lined, and one who never exercises after that hour till after tea: I say, it may reasonably be admitted, with that kind of life and custom, it would be impossible, improper, and ruinous, to rush into company who are of a reasonable kind, meaning to attend their families by ten, and be in bed by eleven. For from seven till eleven, or half past ten, is my constant practice of study; unless on particular engagements, for which I greatly suffer: For experience tells me, that such intermediate exertions are only a stupid, dreadful encroachment on health, spirits, and every thing. This conduct, by many respectable persons, is attributed to haughtiness, a want of respect to others, and the not being sociable, which in fact is

the reverse; for no one person from the lord to the cobbler, but at eleven or twelve at night will find me always too ready to associate, and not be in a hurry to get into my bed that night, or out of it the next morning.

But instead of egotism, let me recollect with pleasure, the few intimates I had at Leeds. One was Mr. Thomas Barstow, a very respectable and truly friendly man: He was Town Clerk of that wealthy and flourishing place, and to his memory (for he died in the spring of 1792) I retain high esteem and gratitude. He is succeeded in his honours by the truly agreeable, friendly, and worthy Mr. Nicholson of Leeds. My other patron and patroness were (and are) Alderman Kennion and his Lady. Mr. Kennion is a gentleman of most friendly intercourse and good intentions, aided by long experience, judgment, and sound understanding, and a true lover of the drama; which entertainment he strongly and vehemently supported when some years since it was persecuted by the narrow, the superstitious, and the ignorant. His knowledge is not confined to his profession of the physical art, he having given the strongest proofs of the nicest judgment in mechanism.

Mrs. Kennion was an enthusiast, I may say for plays; she was ever termed by me, the pillar of Leeds Theatre: Her anxiety for my success was

great. It is true, the strongest pillars will by time lose their strength, and it may be so with Mrs. Kennion, for she does not contribute all her might and all her strength as formerly; but I must add, the Theatre wanted more support then, being less frequented eighteen years ago; and Mrs. Kennion may (like poor Tate Wilkinson) not be so frisky as eighteen years ago. I must acknowledge, she was a friend in truth to the Theatre in distress, which commands my gratitude, and I boast of her good, and earnest wishes for my welfare still; and there is a secret pride intermixed with duty in acknowledging favours.

All went on pleasantly at Leeds 1779, until Mr. Oram's benefit, on Monday May 31, when unluckily a Mr. PIELÉ offered his services to perform the character of Percy in that play, written by Miss More. As his friends were more in the neighbourhood of Leeds than in the town, being born, as I understood, at Huddersfield or Halifax, he requested to play on the Tuesday instead of the usual night, Wednesday, as his well-wishers would be in Leeds on their usual mode of business on the market-day, and it would save them the trouble of attending in that town for the play only. The reason seemed feasible, and of course I assented: But Oram, whose temper was irascible, and plumed with the success of playing forty years amongst a numerous set of all-

night toppers, could not with moderation bear the least controul, but gave full way to a brutal savage temper, which was with great difficulty tamed: He judged that Mr. Piele's playing on the Tuesday might injure his benefit, without allowing me the privilege of opening the theatre when I pleased, which undoubtedly was, and is my indisputable right; and he behaved so insolently, that I was compelled in duty to myself to discharge him, and make him an example *in terrorem* to others. For a theatre I am certain without subordination could never exist; equality would render it a scene of rebellion and riot: For as *Marr* said, (one of the worst actors that ever exhibited in theatre or in barn) he could not perceive any superiority in Mr. Garrick's acting to his own, except that he was obliged to act *Rossini*, while Garrick strutted in *Lothario*.

Strong application for his re-engagement followed, but I was inflexible, and certainly with just grounds for resentment; firm in my resolution of *No, no*; and was not to be softened. In Mr. Inchbald I put confidence; in him I found a friend, and could there place every dependence: I felt myself truly happy, that propriety and accident had supplied me with one who possessed such great superiority as well as versatility of talents, and with the opportunity of ridding myself of so troublesome and so tedious an actor.

as Oram. But, mark reader, what avails all our resolutions, hopes or fears, for on the fatal Sunday following, June the 6th, 1779, I desired Mrs. Wilkinson, (on one of the finest days ever seen, and when every face was dressed in smiles) as she traversed before dinner, to call and ask Mr. and Mrs. Inchbald to drink tea with us in the afternoon. When Mrs. Wilkinson came home, she said she had paid her visit as I had desired, that they were both well and in high spirits; and that he declared he never was so happy in his life, and would with great pleasure obey the summons. Our dinner was instantly produced, the duck not half dissected, nor the green peas begun with, when a servant came in breathless and pale, wildly exclaiming that Mr. Inchbald was dead!—Mrs. Wilkinson and I felt as if by enchantment turned to stone: As soon as a little recovered, and by the aid of two or three glasses of wine, but no food (for of that I was incapable) I sallied out to be satisfied of the truth, which melancholy tidings was confirmed; and all I could gather or surmise, I believe, is as follows, and literally true; and I dare pronounce there are some few would envy such a death. I have already mentioned the day's excessive warmth, and perhaps lulled by the fall of waters, added to the noon-day's heat, might not only give a hint for sleep, but the beautiful Mrs. Inchbald that day

looked beyond herself, a goddess, not a mortal, and appeared so languishingly sweet, as if secure of all beholders' hearts.

Inchbald was a lover in the true sense of the word, which does not always accompany the title of husband——

“He was gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth:—

“His every sense was lost in every joy.”

He might with truth boast like Shakespear's valiant Moor——

“———If I were now to die

“'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear my soul

“Hath her content so absolute—that not another

“Comfort like to this succeeds in unknown fate.”

I feel a pluck at my sleeve, archly saying, “Mr. Tate! there are few such husbands.” True, Mr. Hint; but at the same time you make that observation, you will admit there are few Mrs. Inchbalds. Look at her now, and if your imagination will permit, guess what she was then. Then Mr. John Kemble bowed at her shrine, and felt her dazzling power——

“And stood whole nights and days to gaze upon her.”

And as to her mental qualities, they certainly have greatly added to every other irresistible attraction; and the world in general is well ac-

quainted with her taste, judgment, and sensibility.

Mr. Inchbald had declared that day to Mrs. Wilkinfon, he felt himself so perfectly contented, that he wished to end his days under his then present manager; that wish he *too* soon obtained.

Surely this true state of things will lead the idle unmarried to change their opinion, and agree with Manly——

“ Vain rovers now will envy what they hate,

“ And none but fools will mock the married state.”

And men and all the Heathen deities surely must have gazed with envy and admiration on such happiness——

“ He look’d and gaz’d, and gaz’d and look’d,

“ Nor envy’d men nor gods.”

Such excess of joy called for repose. She thought he had the cholic; he faintly answered, “ Yes;” when she, like Letitia in the Old Bachelor, advised him to “ Lie down !” And every dramatic reader will recollect she says,—“ *Mr. Spintext ! Mr. Spintext !* lie upon your stomach; “ laying on the stomach is good for the cholic.” Be that as it may, a good or bad recipe, I leave the reader to his or her own conjecture; however the happy pair retired to rest, where she, a second *new-born Venus* lay—but such a vortex of perfect bliss was too rich a feast to be the lasting

lot of mortal man. It was a banquet for the gods; and on that earthly paradise, as on a bed of roses without thorns, the poor or rather the rich, the worthy Inchbald, suddenly expired!—I say the rich, for he certainly cannot be poor who dies possessing *all he wishes*.

I have heard of a general and others having a death somewhat similar, but such ecstatic joy is not the lot of many, and cannot better be described than by the following lines, from Dryden's Aureng Zebe.

- “ And why this niceness to the senses shewn;
- “ Where Nature sums up all her joys in one;
- “ Gives all she can, and labouring still to give,
- “ Makes it so great, we can but taste, and live:
- “ So fills the ideas, that the soul seems fled,
- “ And thought itself does, for the time, lie dead;
- “ Till, like a string screw'd up with eager haste,
- “ It breaks, and is too exquisite to last!”

My true esteem for Mrs. Inchbald would render me miserable to offend or wound her delicacy, she herself, however, will now and then be whimsical; but I would not on any account have that charming woman, by me, or any body else, handled too roughly, or played on too much. Not but Mrs. Inchbald the lovely, and I, have had our bickerings, but then I touched her tenderest point. She judged from my being in London when her new play was acted, that I had made a

jumble of my own from the seeing it, and dished it up for the public. She wrote me word, "*she wished her own play** to be acted at York, instead of some contemptible jargon under *that* title: Would pay her thanks to *any* person for wresting her fawn from a pretended short-hand writer:"—Also added, "that I was quite right not to let my copy go out of my fight; I ought to be ashamed of it. She was so much so, that in about half-a-dozen letters to York she would immediately disown it; and so she would, by a public advertisement, whatever I might hereafter *steal*."—But when fully convinced her allegations were unjust and ill founded, and that neither her piece nor her parts were sullied by my fingers, her bosom ceased to heave, or her heart, the mansion of goodness, to beat with alarm, and I received a condescending letter of forgiveness, with an olive branch;—said, "she forgave every thing; that all her acquaintance agreed in her opinion, that I must be a *gentleman* of the most elegant and refined taste upon earth, or I never could have contrived so bewitching a compliment†. She was going to see a *new tragedy*, and expected to be *very merry*," &c.

As to my elegance and refinement I had often had my doubts, but when the sensible and beautiful Mrs. Inchbald's whim and understanding

* Such Things Are.

† A token of esteem I had sent to Mrs. Inchbald.

found them out, how could I longer judge myself deficient in any point. Maternal affection had roused her to resentment, but I had paid every attention to her offspring in my power.

Being at present restored to her good graces, I do not see how I possibly (to my fancy) could have put my agreeable captivating friend into a more pleasing point of view; and shall be thrice happy, should she think so too; for I do aver and protest, (as a gentleman-like attestation)—“That, I do regard her—dearly regard her—“or comfort forswear me. Unkindness may “do much; but never taint my love.”

Now, reader, do not be over delicate or angry, for it cannot be blotted from my journal as false, nor from my memory where it is rooted, and I mean no more than a strict relation of an unexpected event, which leads to a description of facts in my register: For observe, on the Monday's play, which was *The Grecian Daughter*—(Monday, June 7th)—for the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. King,—Mr. Inchbald was to have played *Melanthon*, a character till that time, always acted by the then late disbanded Oram. The play was full of characters, and the sudden calamity of Mr. Inchbald's death on the Sunday, put me to a thousand more shifts, and perplexities, than I had been for some time accustomed to: No alternative was left, but to prove how little a manager's

resolution is to be relied on, when interest moves the scale——

“What is honour? A word. What is that word?”

“Air.

“Who hath it? He who died on Wednesday last.”

Therefore a hint was given from Court, that his services were really wanted. Submission from Oram was made, without loss of time or hindrance of business, he was most graciously and smilingly received; and the resty post-horse trotted for some time longer on the rough round of our Theatre, and the theatrical machine moved gradually from place to place the usual annual August procession of our motley group. I certainly was a false knight and forsworn when I engaged Mr. Oram again; yet nothing hurts a manager more, than to suspect his honour. I feel myself very tenacious of my honour:—The public in general put little faith in their manager's honour:—The manager on the other hand, is unreasonable, and wishes them to have no doubt, but place all confidence in his honour. Yet as easy as that seems to be in thought, it seldom is attained, so the best way is to let time, experience, and observation decide our honours; for after all the public will judge; and (joking apart) sometimes without cause very cruelly and decidedly. But still I say to myself—Be quiet, Tate!

for if your honour is so tender as not to bear the touch, it is very suspicious, and will make thee only doubt thyself, and become bankrupt of honour, as of wealth. So with my honour in my pocket, not intermixed with more sterling metal, I will jog on with my words, and inform the reader that soon after the interment of Mr. Inchbald, Mr. Kemble wrote an elegant Ode to his memory, which I have here inserted.

ODE TO THE MEMORY OF MR. INCHBALD.

WHAT time the weak ey'd Owl, on twilight wing
Slow borne, her vesper scream'd to Eve, and rous'd

The lazy wing of Bat

With Beetle's fullen hum,

Friendship, and she, the maid of pensive mien,

Pale Melancholy, point my sorrowing steps

To meditate the dead

And give my Friend a tear.

Here let me pause—and pay that tear I owe:

Silent it trickles down my cheek, and drops

Upon the recent sod

That lightly clasps his heart.

But ah! how vain!—Nor Flatt'ry's pow'r, nor Wealth's,

Nor Friendship's tear, nor widow'd ANNA's voice,

Sweet as the harps of Heav'n,

Can move the tyrant Death.

Hence, ye impure!—for hark—around his grave

The Sisters chaste, the Sisters whom he lov'd,

In nine-fold cadence

Chaunt immortal harmony.

'Tis done—'tis done—The well-earn'd laurel spreads
Its verdant foliage o'er his honour'd clay :

Again the Muses sing—

Thalia's was the deed.

Thou honest man, farewell !—I wou'd not stain

Thy worth with praise—yet not the bright-hair'd King,

Who woos the rosy morn,

And west'ring skirts the sky

With ruddy gold and purple, e'er shall see

Thy likeness—nor yon paly Crescent call

Her weeping dew to kiss

A turf more lov'd than thine.

The Widow Inchbald's benefit was on Monday June 14th, and very genteelly attended.—Her first appearance, after having been arrayed in her weeds, was as Hector's lovely widow, for the benefit of Mr. Kemble, on Monday June 21, 1779, but in that play he could not declare his passion in blank verse, as Mrs. King, the Hermione (whom he did not admire) claimed all his vows, as the Prince Orestes.

Mrs. Raworth was once more engaged, to supply Mrs. Hitchcock's department, during her elopement to the Hay-Market: As was a Mr. TYLER, to succeed Mr. Wood, who had marched away for London in the same manner.

Mr. Tyler continued some seasons ; was liked much in Arionelli, and the Trio in "The Critic," and was useful in many operas and plays ; had a party of friends attached to his interest (par-

ticularly at Hull) but was of a discontented temper, always forming his own distress, and never more contented than when he made himself miserable; always supposing some plot was hatching to injure him, and actually was so foolish as to leave a comfortable situation, and at a time I wished his continuance; and that merely, because I appointed Mrs. Jordanto perform Arionelli, who was at first received at York as an object of attraction: But of that history more hereafter when I arrive at the time and place.

The Leeds season 1779 concluded much earlier than usual; was neither ill nor well attended, and closed July the 12th. The company made a trip, till the York races, to Pontefract, where they, on trying the experiment, found a little building, called by the inhabitants a *Playhouse*: The success they met with, and the genteel neighbouring families who honoured their stage endeavours, (which certainly were of a superior kind to any they ever had been accustomed to see on that spot) gave rise to my ruminating at some time to have a regular theatre built and established on that little pleasant Montpelier of Yorkshire; which, in the course of my narrative, the reader will find has been put into force and practice.

During my interregnum of a few weeks, I treated Mrs. Wilkinson, son, and self, with a

delightful jaunt, to Birmingham, Worcester, Gloucester, Bath, and Bristol, by way of pleasure and recreation. We met at Birmingham, my friend and acquaintance, Mr. Mattocks, where two theatres were opened, in opposition bloody. With Mr. Mattocks, (who had also a theatre then open at Portsmouth, under his direction, conducted by a Mr. Wheeler) I wished much, as I was advancing so near the borders of Hampshire, to extend the visitation to my native home, Portsmouth; but Mr. Mattocks persuaded me not to explore further than Bath and Bristol, but to return back and play four or five nights, and meet my very agreeable pleasant friend, Mr. Lewis. I have often regretted the not visiting Portsmouth, as the sight of that place would have been new and pleasing for Mrs. Wilkinson to have remembered, as likewise to myself the revisiting a spot where I had experienced real friends and many happy days.

The nights at Birmingham, (though a very good company, Manager Mattocks, Mr. Lewis, (of Covent-Garden) Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Bannister, jun. Mr. Davis, (*now* of Covent-Garden) Mr. Wewitzer, Mr. and Mrs. Nunns, Mr. Charlton, Mr. Doyle, Mr. West, Mr. Aickin, (of Covent-Garden) Mrs. Kennedy, (of Covent-Garden) Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Charlton, and Mrs. Melmoth) would not do. Mr. Miller was then manager

• the New Theatre at Birmingham, and that theatre was very elegant. The scenery was then good ; but as to which was the best company ? Why certainly success proved Mr. Miller's the best.

Mr. Miller was a man of friendly and honest intentioned principles, and possessed of property, but unfortunately infatuated with two galloping hobby-horses—Managing a company of unruly actors, and also much more fond of his own acting than his auditors were. What cured him, in part, as to his love of fame, as an actor, was performing Hamlet (I believe) at Manchester, where great tokens of displeasure were given, whether with propriety I do not take upon me to answer ; but the enraged Hamlet as a thunder-bolt on his opponents, and to strike a general panic and dismay, told them (like Mr. Bayes) “ Gentlemen, if you do not approve my “ Hamlet, I do solemnly assure you, that I never “ will favour the audience again with the perform- “ ance of my Frenchman ; ” (which by the bye I have often heard mentioned as beyond mediocrity.) The audience laughed and hissed, and the determined Miller kept strictly to his threat and resolution. It is not unlike Mr. Bayes, who says— “ So Sir, in my prologue I advance to the audi- “ ence in a long black veil, and a great huge “ hangman behind me, with a furr'd cap, and his

"sword drawn; and there tell 'em plainly, that
 "if, out of good nature, they will not like my
 "play, egad, I will e'en kneel down, and he shall
 "cut my head off. Whereupon they all fall a-
 "clapping." &c. Mr. Miller's auditors, I be-
 lieve, did not agree as Mr. Bayes's did.

Mr. Miller hurt his health and property in pur-
 suing a wild-goose chase,—murdering sleep,—
 with the loss of every comfort,—building air-castle
 theatres as to profit, and wearily trudging with
 old clothes and water-daubed canvas. Luckily,
 for that gentleman's widow, Dr. Holland (a re-
 spectable physician at Retford) has had the
 trust of all the moveables and properties whereof
 the late manager stood possessed.

The principal performers that summer, 1779,
 at the New Theatre were Mr. Miller, Mr. Far-
 ren, (of Drury-Lane) Mr. Fullam, Mr. John-
 son, Mrs. Hunter, and Mrs. Farren.

Mr. Lewis's benefit was on Monday August 2,
 1779, (to the shame, beyond a doubt, of Bir-
 mingham be it spoken :) He had a new Interlude
 called "The Illumination," and Mr. Colman's
 new Comedy of "The Suicide," wherein he
 acted Tobine most admirably, (I performed Win-
 grave;) Mr. Lewis also acted Dick in The Ap-
 prentice, and the amount of his house was *nine*
pounds!—Reader, it is truth!—Blush for Bir-
 mingham!

My benefit was on Monday August 9th, that same pleasant season. I acted Shylock, Sir Archy, and Tragedy a-la-Mode; and for my neglect of self-satisfaction in not having once more visited Portsmouth, I had my deserts; for the fatigue of so much exertion and dressing, actually threw me into a fever, and my receipt was *seven pounds!*—*Not one* place taken in the boxes.

Mr. Lewis left Mrs. Lewis at Birmingham, and went himself to Liverpool, for an engagement of a few nights, where his performances were well attended, and himself liberally rewarded;—and the return to Birmingham, on a natural supposition, that the gratitude of the audience, and a thorough sense of not having behaved well to so excellent an actor, had a natural right for expectation of a reimbursement; but experience proves that does not always happen for notwithstanding Mrs. Lewis, an amiable handsome woman, and a pleasing actress, played that season on a reliance of the *benefit night* as her reward; yet that excellent actor on his return played for that night *only*—and I believe the curtain drew up to the amount of *eight pounds!* and dropt to the amazing sum of *twelve pounds!*

During Mr. Lewis's first engagement at Birmingham that summer, he acted Hotspur, Marplot, Touchstone, the West Indian;—myself Falstaff, Jaques, and Cadwallader;—Mr. Aickin

of Covent-Garden, Horatio and Lord Hastings;—myself Sciolto, Dumont, and Mrs. Cole;—and for my labour you will think I was not overpaid by the receipt of the benefit above-mentioned.

It is a proof how variable theatrical success in life is—how very uncertain; and may be a warning beacon to air-castle builders and unskilful swimmers not to go too far out of depth with any dependence of what shall be or may be attained, but think of what disgrace and mortification may occur. I do not arraign the judgment of Birmingham, (although this unfortunate and troublesome adventure happened to myself) as that audience has so often properly distinguished and rewarded merit; but it was owing to that unaccountable, insurmountable kind of a cloudy atmosphere which too often overhangs a theatre, and indeed as often falls suddenly down with calamities on the worthiest families in all degrees of life, as the times have terribly, as lamentably evinced.

The York races 1779, Mr. Lewis gave me once more the benefit of his assistance, and what was still more agreeable to myself, family, and acquaintance, the benefit of his company. He acted several of his favourite characters. That week Mr. Ross happened to be at York: Mr. Palmer, then manager of the Bath theatre, (since more elevated; and though rewarded, I

know not whether sufficiently for the infinite labour and pains he has undergone) and who is now in the post of honour, *a private station*, happened also to be there with an acquaintance: He accidentally called on Mr. Ross, on a morning visit at the New Baths, (then erected by Dr. Hunter of York, from which great expectations were formed) when Mr. Ross was accidentally looking over his receipts of the Edinburgh theatre, of which he was then patentee and manager. Mr. Ross hinted to Mr. Palmer, he was wearied with management himself, and was equally tired of acting;—that he had sustained great losses from Mr. Digges's never having paid him his rents with any punctuality; nay, was greatly in his debt. Mr. Palmer came to me (Mr. Woodfall's properly termed *Wandering Patentee*) and said the accounts appeared to him such as was an object, if with a possible distance of being connected with his Bath theatre, he should not hesitate a moment to greedily embrace such an opportunity: My own eagerness for variety, and high opinion of Mr. Palmer's judgment, experience, and veracity, made me anxious for a private meeting at the Baths (that week of hurry), which was soon accomplished and concluded; for without examining any particulars, either as to repairs and condition of the theatre, or the wardrobe, scenery, &c. I agreed with him at four hundred

pounds for the year, and entered pell-mell to raise a regiment of comedians for Edinburgh, exclusive of my company for York. Previous to that Mr. Digges was out of employment as the tragedian, and was desired to pick a little bit at Hull the ensuing season, and made then a few skulking smuggled voyages in the winter from Hull to Manchester, Liverpool, &c. He acted on Friday October 22, 1779, *Cato* and the *Drunken Colonel*; characters before mentioned that he had played at York. His own night (Nov. 2,) to a full house, he acted *Macheath*, and was in great terror during the whole time of representation, and with difficulty made his escape; as he was attacked at the finishing with bailiffs at each avenue of the theatre. Poor unfortunate Digges! who might be said to be truly *in character* that night, as the scene lay in a jail, and he a prisoner in that jail.

Mr. Lewis would try one night at Wakefield that season; and on Monday, September 6, we advertised the altered play of "*The Comedy of Errors*" and "*The Apprentice*;" for which he was to play on shares; and if the attempt succeeded, he would play another night: but strange to relate, that the novelty of such an excellent; and established well-known actor, excited not the least curiosity or wish to reward or retain such a first-rate performer. In short, as a faith-

ful historian I must relate, that at half an hour after the curtain should have been drawn up, there in truth was but *thirty shillings* in the house. Mr. Lewis not only felt his pride hurt at such a manifest neglect, but seeing plainly it must be like soldiers fighting without pay, he laid down his arms, or rather took off his accoutrements, laughed at the silly accident, and talked of a good supper. After this some few ladies and gentlemen called at the playhouse door, which being closed from absolute necessity, for there was no power over Mr. Lewis beyond his own will: however me, as poor Marplot the manager, had some very severe messages, that "no families would ever come to the theatre if to be so treated," without the least consideration that Mr. Lewis was his own master, and certainly would not labour without being paid his hire.

Here it will seem strange to a southern reader, and of course immediately be conjectured, that Wakefield has a lack of spirit, and must of course not be a town calculated for theatrical entertainments. It would be unjustifiable and ungrateful in the extreme, did I not as quick as thought clear such an unjust suspicion; for in all my circuit, I have not a more spirited or liberal audience, and the attendants to the gallery more numerous and full of alacrity to make their appearance, than at Wakefield, in any town in my

circuit. But the mystery lies here ; fashion and custom are stubborn things to subdue ; I only know one performer who makes to-morrow equal with to-day, and that is Mrs. Siddons. But with that lady, as an exception, every person who has travelled Great Britain and Ireland, must have observed, that at many places (as the opera in London on a Saturday) the theatre is crowded *because it is Saturday*, without play or players being considered ; and on the reverse side, at many places, the theatre totally neglected for the said given reason, *because it is Saturday*. So that at Wakefield, where I am always anxious, willing, and proud to acknowledge yearly favours, whenever that town and its kind inhabitants are mentioned, yet they never, unless on some *very extraordinary occasion*, have hitherto attended the theatre before the race-week ; and then like a jack wound up to its height, they find the way, and spin and flutter to the theatre till its close for the season drops the weight. If I say a bad house last night, yet a good play and well acted—"Very true, Mr. Wilkinson ; but you should consider it is before the races." At Leeds I have frequently heard a stranger ask—Why the bells were ringing ? the man, woman, or boy who were so interrogated answered gravely, "*It was Thursday night*;" which I believe is a never failing custom in the town of

Leeds on a Thursday: but still that is no good reason given to the inquirer. I trust my good patrons at Wakefield will not be offended at this observation, but laugh and forgive me; as it is, in some measure, necessary as a faithful chronologist, in this my register, to give all little peculiarities and customs, and is offered truly respectfully, and not impertinently to their observations. I despise ingratitude, and should condemn myself if I ever mentioned Wakefield, but with that true gratitude my obligations claim from my debt to their kindness.

Wakefield season, that year 1779, notwithstanding a bad beginning, made a good ending, and with its usual eclat; from whence we broke up our camp, and did not halt till we arrived at our Doncaster autumn quarters. I recollect no particulars more, than that the brilliancy of the company was then *very* conspicuous, and has been increasing every year as to fashionable attendance; and at the time I am scratching these lines I believe I may aver, for an assemblage of persons of distinction, as ladies and gentlemen, it now stands the foremost in Great Britain, and bids likely so to be on a lasting establishment. It is rumoured, with what truth I know not, that the race days will be augmented in future—I say amen, and so be it.

Signior Rosignol was engaged to warble his birds for five nights at Doncaster 1779. At the end of the season Mrs. Raworth left me; the particulars relating to that, I believe, I have given before. Mr. and Mrs. King also at the same time went, as noticed, on their Lincolnshire expedition.

Young Mr. INCHBALD was engaged (at the request of his lovely mother-in-law, Mrs. Inchbald) in July 1779, and did not leave me till May 1786. He was a young man of great service in a theatre, though not so attentive always as he should be, but of good behaviour: When he left me, he cost me two performers at least to supply his loss. Mrs. Montague and Mr. Charles Wood again joined me from the Haymarket.

The signal was given for Hull 1779, where oysters and well-fed fowls hailed us with those welcome tokens to comfort us as usual for the winter season.

I was at that time the pompous one and indivisible, the comprehensive, incomprehensive Mr. Manager of three patent theatres, the royal trio of Edinburgh, York, and Hull: I increased my theatrical army, in order to provide ample forces to forage and insure provision for the winter months in the north of England and the metropolis of Scotland: Mr. SWALWELL offered his services on my beating up for volunteers, and ap-

peared at Hull in the character of Sir Charles Racket. I cannot say with the success he wished, but I can boast of its being a lucky occurrence to me, as his great punctuality as treasurer, and his knowledge of accounts, place the books of my theatre, not only as an example of correctness, but perhaps the best regulated of any theatre whatever: This is a particular circumstance of good fortune to me, who am indolent, as well as not by any means expert in so material a point of knowledge, highly necessary for all mankind; ay, indeed, for both sexes equally, and of every age. Added to his particular regularity, his steadiness in his department, and good behaviour to persons of all ranks, deservedly obtains the good will of all, by which means his services to me and the public get repaid, and that with the good will and best wishes of his noble donors.

Mr. ALDRIDGE, at that time well known as a capital dancer, was engaged for Hull and York for a few nights, and then to Edinburgh, under my auspices.

Mr. and Mrs. SMITH from Dublin, were also engaged. She made her first appearance in the character of Beatrice, and Mr. Colman's Young Actress: she acquitted herself well, and promised to be, what she afterwards proved, a great favourite. She continued at Hull till the end

of the season, then joined me and my camp at Edinburgh.

Mr. Aldridge stood announced for my benefit night at Hull; he did not come to his time, but the audience not doubting (for once) of my truth, I was dismissed with honour from the court; and when Mr. Aldridge did make his appearance he was well received, notwithstanding the disappointment. Mr. Aldridge died in the spring 1793 at Edinburgh.

Mr. CAUTHERLY likewise performed a few nights at Hull; he acted Dorilas in Merope, the West Indian, &c. and was engaged for Edinburgh. I must in justice note, that Mr. Cautherly's behaviour on and off the stage was, and is respectable, and like a gentleman: The word *gentleman* offers to my delicate and susceptible mind that which I fear will disgrace my page, and indeed quite opposite to Mr. Cautherly, and should be hid beneath the veil of night, and neither mentioned nor supposed before the curtain; but I am tempted thereto as the observation may possibly tend to a reformation of manners; and however truly reluctant, I will run the hazard of censure or pardon, hoping to be prosperous from being just.

The reader may here be led to expect matter of importance, but it is in truth quite the reverse, therefore, without equivocation, circumlocution,

or mental reservation, I must declare, there is nothing, no nothing offends me more to the soul than when I see a fine periwig-powdered actor, either as the stage monarch, lord, or fine gentleman, and perchance bedecked with the real lord's court habiliments, forget himself so far at the very time he is puffed with fancied greatness, and so well accoutred, when standing behind the scenes, as to be *seen* blowing his nose with his fingers; whenever I scan such an action in the theatre, or even in common life, in the street, be the person ever so well dressed, I set him down in my opinion as neither having been born, bred, or as one who ever will or can be a gentleman. Nay, were it even a member of the National Assembly of Paris, it would not alter my opinion. How Adam and Eve managed such necessary business, I cannot tell, but should be glad of information. I am led to imagine, that as Eve did make aprons of fig leaves, she might possibly make pocket-handkerchiefs of the like commodity; but as fingers, we need not be informed, were made before the cutlery manufacture for knives and forks, we will suppose they made use of those natural materials to pick their goose bones at Michaelmas (if that was their fashionable season :) But as we moderns are at present well supplied with those agreeable and useful utensils, I would prefer the constant employment of knives and

forks, and never neglect the *handkerchief*,—ay, the *handkerchief*,—on any occasion whatever. I am certain, were the late Lord Chesterfield living, he would honour me (on the indelicate subject) with a gracious nod of assent and smile of approbation; and in his lordship's name, as his departed spirit, permit me to *beg*, intreat, and conjure, all our stage persons of quality and fine gentlemen, ay, even from the cobbler to the tinker, that they will *strictly observe*, abide by, and keep this law—and never forget the handkerchief. I cannot quit this disagreeable subject without remarking, that I have seen more than one tragedy queen offend me on the stage with her handkerchief, by too great an oblation of moisture from the different pearly fountains, which occasioned a frequent blowing of the nose, an action by no means fit for a St. James's court representation. Such queens, I often think, should have a relay of pages, who at the end of each scene might present a clean superfine handkerchief, and drop the melancholy heavy one into the first convenient necessary washing tub.

Mr. JOHNSON was likewise engaged: He was a comedian of great merit; much liked at Hull and York that winter; and was in truth a good actor. He after that engaged under Mr. Jackson at Edinburgh; where he rose into great esteem,

but died there at a time when he was in deserved repute.

Mrs. THORNTON was articulated as a finger: She had been well received at Vauxhall, was retained for York, as were Mr. and Mrs. HUDSON; we were reconciled once more, notwithstanding our disagreement mentioned some seasons prior to this new fangled scheme, by which I was to accumulate, and not know how I could expend, the riches of my royal triple alliance of patents.

About Christmas 1779, armed in full force for either field, fearless of the inveteracy of clime, tempest, and the very inclement season, I marched to take possession of my Scotch territories, leaving my Southern forces under the discretion and direction of my trusty commander Cummins: But I cannot help being vulgar here, or possibly make a more apposite idea, than the common saying of, between two stools there is danger of a certain part coming to the ground; for my worthy friends at York, as is natural on all divisions, complained that the best performers were taken to Edinburgh, as in general we like not what we have, but what we have not; the reader will also (if theatrical) easily conceive the expence of journeys, with two wardrobes: For Edinburgh had not, nor yet has, or by some fatality or other ever had, any thing deserving the name of a wardrobe; mine was and is, with-

out vaunt, the most deserving that title out of London*.

This northern expedition was undertaken at a time when sterling coin was truly scarce; and *quit without money* will never insure success, either for the Church, the State, or the *humble Stage!* Edinburgh at that period and the present, will not bear a comparison; the date will confirm the idea, where the reader will find it was at the fatal and unfortunate push of the war with America: Thus I had many difficulties to encounter. Indeed we are unhappily plunged in a war now, which pray God may end speedily with honour, justice, and happiness to ourselves, and also content and harmony with our neighbours. The almanac has said, "that war begets poverty, and poverty begets peace;" I am certain that I am sufficiently poor to wish for a peace, and the sooner the better, or by the ensuing year I shall be as ragged as a *Sans Culotte* with all his bareness and *without the hardiness*. Indeed, I fear the boast of equality on the part of France visionary—Here, there, and every where the love of power is more predominant and natural to the mind than is in general honestly admitted in argument, or in word or thought. The wish for superior sway is inherent, more or less, in the human breast, than is fairly acknowledged in every class. The player wishes to be

* Mr. S. Kemble has remedied that defect.

the manager (who is a despot); the manager is not contented but prays devoutly for something more permanent, superior, and more lastingly secure: And with such visionary objects we beguile our imaginations. As we are born to bloom and fade, it certainly is an idle term to say we are killing time; for all the universe combined, freemen and slaves, cannot subdue that all conquering hero: He who takes a survey of all the world would smile at such an impotent attempt. One comfort is, we have not any occasion now to puzzle the will or the mind with Hamlet's "*To be, or not to be!*" as our polite neighbours the French, have peremptorily settled it, "*Not to be,*" without the being perplexed with *dreams to come*.

But not to trespass on patience, I must mention in this my narrative, that Edinburgh city since the time of my management 1780 and 1781, has rose in affluence and dignity, and is, I believe double the size: It holds out great temptation, and I might have had it two years after, in preference to Mr. Jackson, on reasonable terms. I knew its value, but I must have been joined with a head, in point of understanding, far superior to mine, a gentleman who was a sincere friend while attached, but soon offended, and when offended became an implacable and dangerous enemy; his name was Walter Ross. A fatality has attended that theatre by its seldom having had persons of

probity as the conductors to ensure its credit; though on successful seasons the treasury receives astonishing sums. From the year 1758 I will mention the various managers as a corroboration of what I have advanced relative to a city, to the inhabitants of which my affection and duty is tied by the strongest gratitude and respect; for I never visited that place, but the favours were rather increased than diminished. I observed also on my repeated trips to that noble city, that a regular circuit, by some unfortunate means or the state of the country, the principal towns being not only distant, but directly contrary for theatrical support—by which means from want of foresight, the manager's want of money, (that grand electrical machine) or some cause or another, the company of comedians seldom, if ever, have flourished the whole year on a creditable and profitable plan. Reflection and time with the experience of theatres, and the disasters that attend many capital horses in the theatric field, taught me not to neglect the substance for the shade. Edinburgh itself is intrinsically golden ore, yet the country does not abound with it, nor theatric love; consequently, if York did not receive such sums as Edinburgh, I reflected York was not attended with near the expence: My friends in Yorkshire were valuable and constant, my circuit honourable, and afforded a real gen-

demeritlike income, the other precarious; therefore a very little consideration, for once in my life, got the better of inconstancy and wish for change: And I do aver on my word I never have listened or wished from the year 1780 to change my situation out of Yorkshire, for the management of any other theatre in the world. I am happy with my friends, contented with my income, and truly use every endeavour to please. I may not be always right—and I hope am not always wrong. I am sometimes out of favour, sometimes not; the fate of my place: which makes me truly happy when in the sunshine of favour. Man and wife, I have been told, do not always agree; but then it is better surely (I should imagine) to have the rumpus reconciled again. In all theatres, where, though great sums may be received occasionally, yet when the day of retribution arrives, it plainly appears in theatrical receipts,—all is not gold that dazzles; nor does the tinsel monarch find, that all the shining ore he handles “sticks to his fingers like meal.”

The managers of the Edinburgh Theatre within my time, as near as I can recollect since the year 1758, have been Mr. Lee, Mr. Love, Mr. Ross, Mr. Callender, Mr. Dowson, Mr. David Beat, Mr. Ross, Mr. Digges, Mr. Corri, Tate Wilkinson, 1780, Mr. Heaphy, 1781, Tate Wilkinson the

ances, 1781, Mr. Jackson, 1782, Mr. S. Kemble Mrs. Esten, and now Mr. S. Kemble and Mrs. Esten. How long this last union may continue, may be surmised (without the gift of forcery); not for many years, nor will they in harmony delight. When I survey the picture of being enthroned and dethroned, of a king and no king, at Edinburgh; surely, reader, you will agree in the opinion, how sensibly happy I ought to feel and think myself possessed of every decent comfort of life, and a family rejoicing in the smiles of content, and receiving every friendly service in Yorkshire

As what should have preceded, like an odd play-bill, which sometimes makes the first to be last, and the last to be first, in order I apprehend, to hint we players are not entirely unacquainted with good works: Therefore I request now to be imagined safely arrived at Edinburgh, and opening that theatre for the season, on Saturday December 18, 1779-80, where the company was much better calculated for comedy than for tragedy. There was an occasional prologue spoken by Mr. Woods, which I have quite forgot, but of course the muses were invoked! Shakespear and Otway were to treat; morality to be strictly observed; heart-felt gratitude, laughter and woe alternately to grace the scene; with a number of the like promises, and ended

with the hand upon the heart, then a bow, a scrape, and your humble servant. Possibly many speeches, fervently spoken, have not had so much or more sincerity. The company consisted of Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Woods, Mr. Cauthery, Mr. Charles Wood; that truly comic ingenious character, Mr. Bailey, (the O'Reiley of Dublin,) Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Montague, Mrs. Hitchcock, Mrs. Shield, Miss Mills (the late Mrs. Chalmers) and Mr. Aldridge, the dancer: Many names, though persons of merit in their profession, were not known in London; but all are remembered by the frequenters of the Northern Theatres, and at Edniburgh. Mr. Woods has been established at that city for many years; and his private behaviour binds their high opinion of his theatrical abilities and talents as an actor. He is fixed as firm in the hearts of the Edinburgh citizens, as their own rock, whereon stands the awful, noble, beautiful, and commanding castle. My performances were done also at that time remarkably well; my scenery was conveyed from Hull, by shipping. Mr. Chalmers, Mr. Bailey, and Miss Mills, being beyond par in Harlequin, Clown, and Columbine, were of great service. "The Touchstone" was particularly well got up, and with good scenery, and my Zanga, Bayes, Roman Father, Falstaff, Ironsides, Midas, Colonel Oldboy, Lufignan, Shylock, Lord Ogleby,

Sir Peter Teazle, Don Manuel, King John, Coriolanus, Poor Vulcan, and Major Sturgeon, were all not only partially received, but many of them of essential service. But I must observe with sorrow, that it was above one month before business grew tolerable, nor were my troops left in garrison quarters at Hull in a flourishing state by any means, either the remainder of Hull season, or the beginning of York, where they received orders to march after I had left them. Every morning at Edinburgh debts due from Mr. Ross, laid upon me the custom of that country, arresting his rent in my hands, Mr. Ross threatening to arrest me for such stoppages when I arrived in England, as my contract was made there. Bad houses at Edinburgh, bad houses at York, made the campaign very disagreeable, hazardous, and fatiguing; and the rent of 400*l.* to be accomplished by the 20th of March, and not any good houses till the last week in January, pushed me as hard as any blast of that severe month did in the north. Indeed I did not clear above 100*l.* exclusive of my benefit (allowing charges to be 35*l.*) which was brilliant.

On my return to York in April, they were very dull and glum, though I made them a delightful company for the spring season. It was indeed a bad time for plays every where. It was, as before observed, the very distressing juncture

of the American, French, Spanish, and Dutch war, against old England. Edinburgh was drained not only of cash, but of most of its principal inhabitants.

Having ended my Edinburgh season, it will be a necessary duty to give information what had been going on at York city. Why, the inhabitants were not in the best of tempers; for the theatrical entertainments, from the same cause before hinted, the American war, money was invisible, not any winter visitors, and they were not pleased with me, though I really, in my vain and wild extended views, meant to have supplied each city with constant variety, and by the help of both theatres, have commanded all the world of players; but these visions of the brain are better and easier in theory, than when put into practice. One Theatre, and to please the public, with a company of players, is a difficult task, and sufficient for any reasonable man. Like a plurality of wives, the poor man had better *think of it only*, and be contented with one; he will not only find that one sufficient, but agree with Major Oakley—"What a pity it is, no one can manage a wife *but* a bachelor."

On Easter Tuesday, March 28, I returned to my post, leaving Mr. Hitchcock as my deputy, and I made my appearance to a good house, in the character of Sir Peter Teazle, was honoured

with a kind reception, though they considered me as a bad boy, and called me a truant.

Saturday April 8th, Mrs. Inchbald acted Hamlet, for her son-in-law's benefit, and delivered many passages with great merit: I need not say that Denmark's Prince was not by any means destitute of grace and elegance; not that I approve such innovations and experiments, but particular occasions have given warrant to them. Mrs. Siddons has acted Hamlet more than once; Mrs. Woffington Sir Harry Wildair and Lotherio; the which precedents were the rocks of experiment whereon so many flirting insignificants have split.

Mr. CHALMERS was in 1779-80, engaged, but from my hurry and negligence, not mentioned in November 1779: He is now well known in most of our theatres, as an actor and Harlequin. He was also engaged for Hull, Edinburgh, and York, for the seasons 1780 and 1781, and was at that time one of the best Harlequins I ever recollect (Woodward excepted,) and was thought so by the different audiences that he has tripped before, at London, Dublin, Edinburgh, York, &c. That gentleman has great merit in several parts peculiar to Mr. Lewis, who seems to have struck his stage mind ever since seeing that gentleman perform at Edinburgh and York, in the year 1780. Mr. Chalmers certainly has not his fea-

tures at command, like his limbs, but he has spirit, utility, neatness, and merit in several particular characters. The punctuality of his payments, and a strict observance of his word, with several good points, do honour to him as a man. I say no more than a strict truth, when I pronounce Mr. Chalmers deserving such eulogium. On the other hand, he is not the tamest of comedians; but soon, porcupine like, sets up his quills, and levels his darts. A love of lace, spangles, and satin, is not more predominant in any actor, than in Mr. Chalmers. I have made repeated observations, that not only actors as well as actresses, if left to themselves, will ever sacrifice character to finery. This great necessary article for the preservation of character, is nowhere so well observed as in London, and that frequently not so strictly attended to, as a good natured critic and man of judgment, like a Woodfall, might wish. But in that great theatric field, Mr. Lewis in Ranger, as a Templar, will be contented with black satin breeches, as gentlemen in a usual mode now wear; but a Ranger in the country would rather give up his favourite character, than not absurdly break through all rule, and have his thighs elegantly decked in blue or white satin, not forgetting the spangles. Nay, I have seen a footman, in "The Conscious Lovers," so tenacious of such gew-gaw improper

finery, that his shoulde-knot has been placed in front, three quarters of a yard long, with satin ribbons, full set with star-like spangles, to convince the audience it was *Mr. Self*.

Mentioning Mr. Chalmers, calls to my mind a Mr. LANE, also engaged for Hull, Edinburgh, and York, 1780. In Sir John Melville, Lord Morelove, and many gentlemenlike characters in that cast, he was truly unexceptionable. His temper, deportment, nice honour, without affectation, and ever strictly sober and attentive, with many good qualities, added to a handsome and expressive face, with a good person, rendered him not only a credit to my theatre, but to every one he was ever known to. He did not continue with me above a year; he went to Ireland, being seduced by the alluring Mr. Hitchcock, who at that time drained my forces, by holding out douceurs from KING DALY of the Dublin Theatre. At that place, I have been informed, the young, the spirited, the good Mr. Lane, formed a fatal attachment, fell into a decline, and died.

I find with being weary of theatrical history, and the great tediousness of the work I have in hand, the reader must now and then excuse me if I make an omission, and am occasionally not so accurate as I could wish; though as to date and persons, I do not in all this jumble recollect any mistake; but I feel truly impatient to get to my

finale: For my eyes, from labour, illness, and attention, suffer amazingly; I fear indeed they will irretrievably have cause to lament a blessing no book can recompence me for:—But all this impertinent chit chat takes from the pursuit in view.

In Leeds season 1780, I do not recollect any remarkable changes: I took the greatest part of the company to Edinburgh races, securing the Scotch part of the company in the north, under the direction of the sensible, trusty, and steady good actor, the respectable Mr. Woods.

Mr. Lewis, of Covent-Garden Theatre, was added also as a strong cannon to secure my castle during the Edinburgh races; also Mrs. Jackson, who was then well known as a performer some two or three previous seasons at Edinburgh, since that the lady managerefs.

Mr. Lewis acted most of his favourite characters at Edinburgh; as Ranger, Atall, Charles in "The School for Scandal," Doricourt, &c.

Mr. Bailey had been all the winter with the company in Edinburgh; a *rich, low* comedian indeed! if I may be allowed the term.

Edinburgh races were brilliant as to an assemblage of persons of fashion, and have greatly increased from that year.

Mr. Jackson (for Mrs. Jackson's benefit the week after the races) produced a tragedy of his own writing, called "Sir James Wallace."

A very good week I had, so as to afford genteel profits, notwithstanding the distance of 200 miles to Edinburgh, and 200 miles back to York races. "The Belles Stratagem" was new, and Mr. Lewis was the Doricourt. On my return to York races, my friend Mr. Lewis again favoured me with his assistance; so that York at last actually became a kind of home to him. I am certain I was always glad when he made my house so.

That season I gave up an article of Mrs. Inchbald's for the following year, to oblige Mr. Harris; who assured me in future he "would (like Young Woudbe in the Twin Rivals) do me all the service he could." And indeed lately I have been much indebted to Mr. Harris for his acts of kindness.

Mr. Bailey (whom I had engaged for the ensuing year at York) when the season finished at Edinburgh, requested the theatre for a benefit; and as I have mentioned particular customs in my own circuit, here let me mention a very particular one of an audience not liking any new innovations, unless submitted to their own consideration, and as such adopted or rejected. Mr. Bailey fearing the success of his benefit—(the fashionable season being over)—on the week after my short summer season, advertised the play of "The Wonder," with entertainments,

&c.; and as a certain card to insure some cash in his till, he advertised, (*London a-la-mode*) - *At the end of the third act* HALF PRICE WILL BE TAKEN.

It is not more strange than true, it was looked upon as mean and as an affront, and no one person could be a greater favourite, as a comedian (as I remember Bailey) in any theatre, and hundreds will assert the same; yet on that *douceur* being held forth to the public, after the third act, *not one* person entered the doors: Nor has half price at Edinburgh, from that year, 1780, ever been offered or expected.

If the audience were unanimous at York, Hull, Leeds, &c. for establishing the said rule, and banishing the too prevailing custom of half price, I would make the alteration speedily, and establish the motion for me and my heirs never to infringe or restore it again into practice, and assure myself in the said declaration, that neither the reader, nor any other person or persons will doubt my veracity.

This experiment of Mr. Bailey's at Edinburgh, was on Saturday, August 5, 1780.

York races immediately following, we all jogged back again across the Tweed, with my new acquisition, Mr. Bailey, who had full command and possession of the Scotch audience: Edwin or Shuter never had stronger hold of the

public; and with the addition of Mr. Lewis, we opened the theatre on the Saturday (August 19th) previous to the race-week, 1780, with Mr. Lewis in Doricourt, and Mr. Bailey (his first appearance), in the Mock Doctor.

Mr. Lewis had observed, when he first saw Mr. Bailey play in Edinburgh, that he wondered at the strong power he seemed to have secured over that audience; and declared he did not by any means approve of him as a comedian beyond mediocrity; but his short time in Edinburgh made a convert of Mr. Lewis to the Scotch opinion; and he said he would not be liked at first at York, which was a true prediction; for Mr. Bailey's performance of the Mock Doctor was very coolly received, and not well approved: Bailey's heart had fallen into a wrong place, he wished himself back again, and the audience at York would not have wished to have retained him; yet a few nights experience had so powerful and so contrary an effect, that in six months he was the idol comedian of the county. So what is to be said more, than that these things were so——But

“Wherefore stands Macbeth amazedly?”

I have not mentioned, that before that circumstance, Miss MILLS, a very pretty girl, a charming little actress, came over, not as a prisoner, but a

volunteer, from Scotland, to my English camp. She captivated Mr. Chalmers, who by "jumping out of the bed and into the bed," as Dolly Snip says, and flying here, there, and every where, at last, like Corinna and Dick, they consented to put their little matters together, and they have done as well as the best of them. She had great merit in the girls; and I am told, at Cheltenham and Worcester she was much approved in the Second Constantia, Lady Teazle, &c. However she is no more; Death took a fancy to her: and if Mr. Chalmers can fancy and get such another clever little woman, he will be the Double Gallant, and a lucky and enviable man. He is now trying his fortune in America.

While Mr. Lewis was with me, he with the powerful assistance of Mr. Harris, with large offers from his hand, and Mr. Lewis as liberal with an offer in the other hand, seduced my dear friend Mrs. Inchbald from me, though actually under article from August, 1780, until May, 1781. But then Mr. Harris offered me his friendship—Mr. Lewis soothed me—till at length depending on a little bribe for the day, and a large promise for the morrow, I yielded up my fair one, and she was conducted to the royal tent at Covent-Garden, where *slaves and all* paid due homage to so much beauty. Nor was that my only loss at that crisis; for be it known, that

whenever any provincial actor or actress makes any stride in the opinion of the audience, fame increasing as she goes, immediately sets a London manager to level his dart, and say, that bird is mine—I *will have it*: So my pupil, young Suett, whom I had advanced to the first seat as a comedian at that time, and who was possessed of popularity, success, &c. and was engaged to me on article, the same as was Mrs. Inchbald; but what are locks, bars, &c. Mr. Sheridan offered genteelly; I knew the actor's mind, after an offer from London, would never be happy, and the assistance of Mr. Bailey would alleviate my loss; though I did not by any means imagine Mr. Bailey would have got to the height of fame in Yorkshire that he certainly did. When Mr. Suett produced Mr. Sheridan's letter for my consideration—I said, "Why, Dick, I'll tell you frankly what I think; Mr. Sheridan's offer has the appearance of liberality, and of great future advantage and promise for your fame and fortune—" But ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats;"—observe this offer is but for one season, and the golden shower is not sure to fall into your lap; for on the contrary, if not entirely approved by the London audience on your first onset, you will be dismissed and degraded, and return to Yorkshire with loss of fame,

“ without rudder or compass; and those who are
“ now your admirers will, when once you want
“ their assistance, wonder they ever allowed you
“ any merit. You are, Dick Suett, under an
“ article to me, which article you must strictly
“ obey, unless Mr. Sheridan will give you a fair
“ chance for your establishment: for the use of
“ appearing before an audience has more weight
“ than audiences or critics are in general aware
“ of.” I therefore freely represented to Mr.
Sheridan the good situation young Suett gave up,
and the certain loss of reputation, if returned
again upon my hands; but if he judged the ex-
periment of his abilities worth three years hazard,
on an increasing annual salary, the article subsist-
ing should not be any bar to Mr. Suett’s advance-
ment in life, as his behaviour and great attention
to his business, demanded every consideration
and justice on my part. Mr. Sheridan, with that
generosity I expected to occur, did instantly an-
swer my letter; said he thought my sentiments
perfectly right, and what between man and man
ever should be considered: If I would give up the
power over Mr. Suett I then possessed, he would
engage him for three years, on increasing terms;
and did not doubt but he would deserve a lasting
situation in Drury-Lane Theatre. On this hint
Suett was free, and he has justified my recom-
mendation and opinion; and I doubt not in a

very few seasons, from this day's writing, but he will rank as a foremost comedian on the London Theatre, for his own credit, and the honour of our Yorkshire Theatres.

Quere—Were I to write a request from myself to Mr. Sheridan, doubtless the same politeness would give an immediate answer? So the reader would naturally suppose: But my *Turkish opinion* inclines me to believe I should not receive any answer at all.

In 1780, Mr. Lewis once more tried an experiment at Wakefield Theatre, but sorry am I in my tablet of memory to relate, that the same lack of curiosity prevailed again; but it was before the races and did not succeed—Tho' not more extraordinary than the Edinburgh half price.—There are many managers would not be displeased if the audience insisted on nothing under full price, and the custom in that respect is various: The reader may depend on it as a fact, that at Dublin, Mr. Colman's Hay-Market Theatre, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and many Theatres of lesser note which I could enumerate, nothing under full price, nor at Sadlers Wells, Astley's, and other places; go on the same night to Mr. Sheridan's Theatre in the Hay-Market, you are admitted at half price; go to Mr. Colman's Theatre only across the gutter, and no half

price is heard or thought of. But I want a whip over my shoulder in order to proceed on business.

Mr. Bailey got most rapidly forward at York: He was universally beloved by the company, and I believe, without an enemy, a *very, very* extraordinary assertion indeed. He will be better known to the reader, on inquiring after the late Mr. O'Reiley (which was his real name) of the Dublin Theatre, where he died, to the regret of all who knew him, in the Spring 1791. His Jobson, Don Cholerick, Mock Doctor, Scrub, and many characters were sterling: But I must leave my history of him for the present, as I shall have to speak of his departure from York, some time later than the date of August 1780, and I will here introduce Miss SCRACE from the Dublin Theatre, an actress of great sensibility and merit, (sister to Mrs. Smith, then my principal first lady actress) and will be recognized by the readers, as Mrs. BATES, some few years since in the Covent-Garden Theatre: An actress worthy of the situation she possessed there, and where she was retained, till that universal foe to the merits and demerits of all mankind, Death, took her from our bustling theatrical life, I hope to a more peaceable abode. Her death was a tedious lingering decline, but when engaged to me, that lady had a strong appearance of health and strength.

With Mr. Bailey and my additional Scotch forces, I proceeded as usual to Wakefield and Doncaster, and gave up my rule in Scotland. Mr. Ross in consequence let the Theatre to the well-known, truly honest Mr. Heaphey of Dublin.

As to Wakefield and Doncaster, 1780, I do not at this moment recollect any circumstance worth relating, but Mr. Bailey pleased more and more at those towns every night he appeared. From thence, late in October, we went to Hull.

Mr. Johnson, a comedian, had left me for Scotland; but his being appointed for Mr. Sterling one night, instead of Oram, in May 1780, the troublesome man, to my infinite satisfaction, gave me serious warning to quit the stage: He had obtained by strict oeconomy, six or seven hundred pounds, which late in life he sunk at 10 *per cent.* to some friend or friends; and with a benefit granted by me to him at Hull, October 31, 1780, he took his last farewell of that stage; but gave him a benefit yearly at York till his death, which happened in the summer 1791.

For the credit of York, Oram knew no wants but a better temper: He was truly a self-tormentor. His benefits were particularly supported by the honourable fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons; by that worthy body he was well respected: For though he tired me, as his

manager, I should behave very ill if I accused him of more than pettish, troublesome foibles.

Mr. Buck (whose real name is Bucknall) was seized suddenly that season on the stage, with a delirium, when acting the Serjeant in the Scheming Lieutenant: He never appeared on the stage after Dec. 1, 1780, but took a benefit for some seasons at Hull and York. Hear it, ye actors! and hear it, Tate Wilkinson! the said Mr. Bucknall has been off the stage ever since the year 1780, and now lives independent, without any wants beyond his income; *another* instance for York Theatre to boast!—his salary only sixteen shillings per week, and a benefit at York, Hull, and Leeds, in yearly course, and those benefits never more than *£6, £6*. The receipt of his best house would have made modern London actors stare and laugh, and laugh and stare. Another circumstance for our credit is; the Bath and York play-bills are not loaded with interludes, and such puffs as certainly degrade, even in London, at benefits, and raise my wonder. But some bills in the country, and even in regular theatres, occasion, by their preposterous length, not only contempt and expence, but laughter, and by the constant repetition answer no purpose or end *but the printer's*. I know more than one brother manager of genius, with whom I am secretly often very angry, for the preposterous length of

their bills, as I am certain it cannot answer any good purpose; but in short every manager should judge for himself. I do not say every actor, because on his benefit night, what he or she would abuse, as a brother actor's bill, they would recommend as excellent for their own night; and what is more extraordinary, make himself or herself believe he is speaking truth: For we speak and see very differently when self-interest is concerned. Mr. Wilson's benefit-bill of Edinburgh, 1793, would cover the *bed of Ware*.—Actors give parts and plays a very different account, at the club in the evening, of what is sent by the manager, and what is offered for benefits by themselves; and I am sorry to say that the public are too apt to like such baits, follow the shade, and leave the substance. We player-folks will be talking. To lay a tax upon our tongues, would be judged and felt as severely as by Fatima in Cymon. But I fear my talking of reformation will not produce any effect, unless I could reform myself, and that I do not find so easy as to assume the wisdom I do not possess.

Hull season, that year, was as calm in the Theatre as its own regular rolling Humber. We had neither storms nor tempests to shake our theatrical bush. In January 1781, we solemnly entered (*all be-winter-clad*) the reverend and an-

cient York city; there all was quiet, neither broils nor discontent. Mr. Kemble acted Hamlet for his benefit, and gave a Lecture on Public Speaking. To say it was pronounced with good emphasis and good discretion, would be as unnecessary, as for me to assert that Mr. Thomas Wright, printer in Leeds, is an honest, cheerful, lively and friendly good man:—All his acquaintance will say, “There needs no ghost to tell us that.”

York winter season, 1781, I produced a Theatrical Fête, which was conducted well, and in general much approved at York. It was also acted at Hull. The first division consisted of the speeches of Brutus and Mark Anthony, in the 3d act of “Julius Cæsar.” The second division was from Massinger’s “Roman Actor:” To those who have not read that noble defence of the stage, they have much pleasure and improvement to come. Mr. Kemble appeared to infinite advantage in Paris: It was indeed on his account I had taken the pains of selecting the scene; and as an instance, Mr. Kemble did not think it unworthy of notice, he has repeated it at Dublin, with great applause; and though so universally studied in all theatrical wrecks and curiosities, I believe it had escaped even his notice, until I had the honour of soliciting his kind attention and the undertaking of that character. The

third division was the 4th act of Shakespear's "Henry IV." where I pleased myself with acting the King; and all the parts were completely attended to. The last performance was three acts from Dr. Young's "Brothers." The whole received much approbation. Mr. Cummins had great merit in Perseus: But to enter into particulars on a principal performer in my company, without speaking of others, would be unjust; and to speak of all would be a voluminous task. He (Mr. Cummins) has better praise as an actor than I can give him; the general voice of our Yorkshire audiences are the best vouchers.

To the PUBLIC.

A gentleman of taste and experience in the theatrical world, having mentioned to Mr. Wilkinson, that he intended giving an evening's entertainment at a London Theatre, under the title of "HUMOURS and PASSIONS; OR, THE SCHOOL OF SHAKESPEAR,"—Mr. Wilkinson thought such a plan might be agreeable to the York audience, and give great scope to performers, in trying their different abilities; but on reflection, has judged it an injury to the stage to take piece-meal, established stock plays, for the purpose, such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Henry VIII.* *Othello*, &c. &c. but is of opinion, and humbly submits to the public, if he could bring forward detached acts from SHAKESPEAR, MASSINGER, and others, where the greatest beauties are to be found, and from such plays as are entirely, or in a great measure, lost to the stage, it would be affording a *nouvelle* and instructive amusement for one night's performance.—As for instance: The third act of *Julius Cæsar*, by Shakespear, may be averred equal to any thing he ever wrote; but the last act, performed even by the best actors, cannot claim attention, and requires great care to prevent laughter. The same may be said of "*The Winter's Tale*," and *The Taming of the Shrew*, yet both are made excellent pieces, in three acts, by Mr. Garrick.—*Love's Labour Lost*; the three plays of *Henry VI.* *Troilus and Cressida*; *Antony and Cleopatra*;

Richard II. &c. notwithstanding they share, in particular scenes, the fire and masterly strokes of his wonderful pen, equal to the best of his works; yet, on the whole, they are so little calculated for stage effect at present, that most of those mentioned may be pronounced as entirely confined to the closet, unless by the means here proposed.—He therefore intends the following as a specimen, which, if accepted, and honoured with the approbation of the audience, there is a fund of entertainment in store, that may be collected in the same manner from several obsolete authors.

On FRIDAY EVENING, May 18, 1781, will be presented,
A SELECTED ENTERTAINMENT,

TAKEN FROM
SHAKESPEAR, MASSINGER, and Dr. YOUNG,

INTITLED
HUMOURS AND PASSIONS;

OR,

A Theatrical Fête.

IN SEVERAL DIVISIONS.

THE FIRST FROM
SHAKESPEAR'S JULIUS CÆSAR.

SECOND DIVISION TAKEN FROM
MASSINGER'S ROMAN ACTOR.
(With DECORATIONS, &c.)

PLAYHOUSE COMPANION—"This play was considered by its author, and by other dramatic poets, his cotemporaries, to have been the most perfect work of his *Minerva*, as appears from his own *Epistle Dedicatory*, and by no less than six several copies of *Veries* prefixed to it. It could not, therefore, fail of meeting with success in the representation. It was revived with some alteration, and printed in 1722, in five acts; and even before that time Mr. Betterton occasioned it to be got up, and gained great applause in the part of the Roman Actor, which he himself performed. The plot of it may be found in the *Historians* of the reign of *Domitian*, and the scene lies at *Rome*."

In this DIVISION will be presented

A DEFENCE of the STAGE,

By PARIS, the Roman Actor, in answer to an accusation brought against it by the Senate.

PARIS, - - Mr. KEMBLE.

This fête, or compilement, call it which you please, was well received at York, Leeds, and Edinburgh; and certainly added to Mr. Kemble's reputation.

In the Roman Actor, Mr. Kemble was particularly impressive; indeed I thought it was calculated for his powers, and was much pleased with the attention he paid to my selection. As many persons may not have perused Massinger, I here insert the scene: It is well worth being locked in the brain of every well-wisher to the drama; therefore I make no apology for what I think will have a general and welcome reception; and am often surprised that many performers are not more universally read in matters of such utility, for their own knowledge, improvement, and instruction.

ROMAN ACTOR.

SCENE THE SENATE.

LICTORS, ARETINUS, FULCINIUS, RUSTICIUS, SURA,
PARIS, LATINUS, ÆSOPUS, *discovered.*

Aret. Cite Paris the tragedian.

Par. Here.

Aret. Stand forth.

In thee, as being the chief of thy profession,

I do accuse the quality of treason,

As libellers against the state and Cæsar.

Par. Mere accusations are not proofs, my Lord;
In what are we delinquents?

Aret. You are they
That search into the secrets of the time,
And, under feign'd names, on the stage present
Actions not to be touch'd at; and traduce
Persons of rank and quality of both sexes,
And with satirical and bitter jests
Make ev'n the senators ridiculous
To the plebeians.

Par. If I free not myself,
(And, in myself, the rest of my profession)
From these false imputations, and prove
That they make that a libel which the poet
Writ for a comedy, so acted too,
It is but justice that we undergo
The heaviest censure.

Aret. Are you on the stage;
You talk so boldly?

Par. The whole world being one,
This place is not exempted; and I am
So confident in the justice of our cause,
That I could wish Cæsar, in whose great name
All kings are comprehended, sit as judge,
To hear our plea, and then determine of us.
If to express a man sold to his lusts,
Wasting the treasure of his time and fortunes
In wanton dalliance, and to what sad end
A wretch so giv'n over does arrive at,
Deterring careless youth, by his example,
From such licentious courses; laying open
The snares of bawds, and the consuming arts
Of prodigal strumpets, can deserve reproof;
Why are not all your golden principles,
Writ down by grave philosophers to instruct us

To choose fair virtue for our guide, not pleasure,
Condemn'd unto the fire?

Sura. There's spirit in this.

Par. If, to inflame

The noble youth with an ambitious heat
T'indure the frosts of danger, nay of death,
To be thought, worthy the triumphant wreath
By glorious undertakings, may deserve
Reward, or favour, from the common-wealth,
Actors may put in for as large a share
As all the sects of the philosophers;
They which could precepts (perhaps seldom read)
Deliver, what an honourable thing
The active virtue is. But does that fire
The blood, or swell the veins with emulation
To be both good and great, equal to that
Which is presented on our theatres?

Let a good actor, in a lofty scene,
Shew great Alcides honour'd in the sweat
Of his twelve labours; or a bold Camillus
Forbidding Rome to be redeem'd with gold
From the insulting Gauls; or Scipio
After his victories imposing tribute
On conquer'd Carthage. If done to the life,
As if they saw their dangers, and their glories,
And did partake with them in their rewards,
All that have any spark of Roman in them
The slothful arts laid by, contend to be
Like those they see presented.

Rust. He has put

The Consuls to their whisper.

Par. But 'tis urg'd

That we corrupt youth, and traduce superiors;

When do we bring a vice upon the stage,
That does go off unpunished? Do we teach,
By the success of wicked undertakings,
Others to tread in their forbidden steps?
We shew no arts of Lydian pandarism,
Corinthian poisons, Persian flatteries,
But mulcted so in the conclusion, that
Ev'n those spectators, that were so inclin'd,
Go home chang'd men. And, for traducing such
That are above us, publishing to the world
Their secret crimes, we are as innocent
As such as are born dumb. When we present
An heir, that does conspire against the life
Of his dear parent, numb'ring ev'ry hour
He lives, as tedious to him, if there be
Among the auditors one whose conscience tells him,
He is of the same mould—we cannot help it.
Or, bringing on the stage a loose adulteress,
That does maintain the riotous expence
Of him that feeds her greedy lust, yet suffers
The lawful pledges of a former bed
To starve the while for hunger; if a Matron,
However great in fortune, birth, or titles,
Guilty of such a foul, unnatural sin,
Cry out, 'tis writ for me—we cannot help it:
Or, when a covetous man's express'd, whose wealth
Arithmetic cannot number, and whose lordships
A falcon in one day cannot fly over;
Yet he so sordid in his mind, so griping,
As not to afford himself the necessaries
To maintain life; if a patrician,
(Tho' honour'd with a consulship) find himself
Touch'd to the quick in this—we cannot help it;

Or, when we shew a judge that is corrupt,
 And will give up his sentence, as he favours
 The person, not the cause, saving the guilty,
 If of his faction, and as oft condemning
 The innocent out of particular spleen;
 If any in this reverend assembly;
 Nay ev'n yourself, my Lord, that are the image
 Of absent Cæsar, feel something in your bosom
 That puts you in remembrance of things past,
 Or things intended—'tis not in us to help it.

I've said, my lord: And now, as you find cause,
 Or censure us, or free us with applause.

Lat. Well pleaded, on my life; I never saw him
 Act an orator's part before.

Æsop. We might have given
 Ten double fees to Regulus, and yet
 Our cause deliver'd worse. [Shout within.]

Enter PARTHENIUS.

Aret. What shout is that?

Parth. Cæsar our lord, married to conquest, is
 Return'd in triumph.

Aret. Break up the council; we will reserve to him
 The censure of this cause.

All. Long life to Cæsar. [Long Flourish, Exeunt:]

After our Fête, &c. we posted in May to
 Leeds.

Leeds had not got into a theatrical spirit, such
 as I had flattered my hopes with from so rich and
 numerous a town of inhabitants, so we only went
 on a tiresome jog trot; and to make my sum-
 mer as light as possible, I hired Sheffield Theatre

for a fortnight; not doubting but a place so populous, a company truly excellent, as the list will prove, and so superior to any ever seen there, with the advantage of wardrobe, &c. would insure me every success. I had engaged Mrs. SILVERTHORNE, a young woman *then* possessed of a wonderful fine voice. Mr. Suett, from Drury-Lane, added his assistance to Bailey's, and victory, was, I imagined, certain. But before I make a triumphal entry or ovation into Sheffield, I must mention that my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock and Mr. Charles Wood again left me, not only for the Hay-Market, but to Mr. Daly, at Dublin. Mr. Hitchcock went as sub-manager, prompter, &c. *never to return*; and he inveigled also Mr. Kemble, Mr. Lane, and others, all for "Dublin hoe," in the following autumn.

I am now, with the reader's permission and patience, to attack the town of Sheffield, where, fearless of their steel weapons, I expected large and willing contributions from the worthy play admirers. They had had for two or three years, wretched companies at Sheffield, the proprietors did not get their rent; and the very name of player was sneered at, and held in the highest contempt. It being the race-week was sufficient, added to the hint of novelty, that tempted me, *the Wanderer*; but, like the Prodigal Son, I experienced hard fare in that hardware town. I

found habitation and food were to be had there as well as at any other place, as indeed their market is plentiful, and as good as it is plentiful, but as to money, none that I could lay hold of.

The MEN at Sheffield Theatre, the races and the week following, in June 1781, were, Mr. Wilkinfon; Mr. Kemble; Mr. Smith; Mr. Suett; Mr. Chalmers; Mr. Leng; Mr. Bailey; Mr. Tyler; Mr. Lane; Mr. Inchbald; Mr. Halker; and Mr. Cummins.

The WOMEN were, Mrs. Smith; Mrs. Silverthorne; Mrs. Cummins; Mrs. Leng; Mrs. Chalmers; and Miss Serace.

The following were the receipts at Sheffield.

First receipt—Wednesday, June 13, 1781, “The Chapter of Accidents” and “The Flich of Bacon” was only	} 32 17 6
Second receipt—“Lord of the Manor,”	} 34 16 6
Third receipt—“The Revenge” and a Pantomime,	} 39 2 0
Fourth receipt—(In the race-week)—“Othello” and “The Mayor of Garratt,”	} 6 6 6
Fifth receipt—Monday following—“Theatrical Fête,”	} 12 4 6

Sixth receipt—Tuesday the 19th—
 West the dancer, promised doing
 wonders, with a Pantomime, &c. } 16 2 6
 and the comedy of "The Brothers," }

Seventh receipt—Mr. Wilkinfon's benefit on Thursday, June 21.—
 The new comedy of "Dissipation," "Ode on the Passions," by
 Mr. Kemble, the new farce of } 22 7 6
 "Tom Thumb," and the following begging paragraph, obtained }

"Mr. Wilkinfon has taken the liberty to put up his name for a benefit, on account of the great and inconceivable expence incurred by the few nights the company have had the honour of performing at the Sheffield theatre. He therefore hopes Thursday next, as *his night*, will not be judged intruding or improper on this occasion."

N. B. Fourteen pounds of the above receipt was in the boxes.

The eighth receipt and last play—was
 on the Friday, "King Henry } 16 2 6
 VIII."

One hundred and seventy-nine pounds nineteen shillings for eight plays, my benefit being

one. No wonder I was considerably out of pocket by this expedition.

Hence it is plainly evident, that the subscribers in a body, with the apparent ostentation of providing for the entertainment of the public, estimate too much value on the property; (Liverpool of late seasons has been an exception to such observation;) for certainly a livelihood should be supposed almost to a certainty beyond the charged rent. But in general they state the rent as trifling, and the emoluments as great. In the course of this narrative, the reader will see at Sheffield I did not clear near the rent my best season there; yet the subscribers have raised it enormously since that time;—the consequence is, that not two seasons have yet occurred where profit has followed the labour to any manager. But there are always desperate people who will give any price; and the director of a company at Tadcaster would promise a better entertainment, than that given at York, and what is more extraordinary, would obtain belief, though a very little knowledge of a theatre would explain such a circumstance vague and impracticable.

From my Sheffield disgraceful enterprize I returned to Leeds, and in a few weeks after hired Edinburgh theatre once more, and on moderate terms from Mr. Ross, and opened it on July 23, 1781. Myself and all my company, without any

foreign assistance, were received with welcome, and as warmly supported. Indeed I do not recollect one play but what was approved; which proves the advantage where a good company, with willing tempers, are together for some time, which was the case that memorable season. However, for the whole representation, I think I can aver, take the plays altogether, they never were so thoroughly well played at Edinburgh as at that time; for added to the being smooth in the performance, there were several performers of merit, and all the inferior parts were then in hands much better than are often seen. Mr. Bailey, their old favourite, they had not seen for the whole year.—Mr. Suett came to me that year for the summer season, and had never before acted at Edinburgh.—Mr. Woods was there.—Mr. Kemble was a novelty, which, as well as his rising and real merit and genius, recommended him to claim public favour. We played the week following, and I closed with “The Duenna” and “The Critic,” for my benefit, in which Mr. Kemble acted Puff. I took my leave and was honoured, I may say, with acclamations of approbation.

The week previous to York races was Newcastle assize week; and at the desire, and influence of Mr. Bradley, then High-sheriff, I obtained Newcastle theatre, and we acted every night, as

we had the week before done at Edinburgh:—(Hard work in hot weather:)—We were favoured with full houses every night, and I was a great gainer. We left Newcastle on the Sunday following, August the 19th, and opened on Monday the 20th, at York races, truly wearied with fatigue, but not, thank God, in want of provender after the hard duty from Leeds to Sheffield, from Sheffield back again to Leeds, and then from Leeds to Edinburgh, and from Edinburgh to Newcastle, and not a play night omitted between Newcastle and York, where we all safely arrived, myself truly harassed and unfit for service; and here we played every night again.

Miss Fanny Kemble was engaged at that time, and made her first appearance at York, in *Lady Townly*, the week after the races, August 27, 1781. She had a strong understanding, and a fine informed mind; but was not so happy in her force on the audience, as she has deservedly been by her exaltation in an honourable marriage with a gentleman of fortune, experience, and understanding, by which she is uplifted to an enviable and independent state, far superior to what a tragedy train, with all the applause that mock monarchy could have bestowed:—Such blessings are rarely the lot of the more exalted.

Mr. Kemble acted *Jaffier* at York, on Friday, August 31, the week following the races, being the last night of his engagement.

At Doncaster Mr. Stephen Kemble was engaged, and made his first appearance in the Earl of Effex, in October 1781.

The Beggar's Opera reversed (*A-la-mode de Londré*) was acted at Doncaster, Hull, &c. and really and truly well; and with propriety I mean as *well* as such an improper performance could be conducted; but London gave the sanction, so in the poor country theatre it could not be deemed unpardonable to the trying how to walk in the steps of our betters.

I will now fly by night or day to Old Kingston-upon-Hull for the season 1781.

The pretty Mrs. Simpson (by Digges always called the *Diamond in Cotton*) was engaged for the winter, 1781: She made her first appearance on Friday, October the 26th, at Hull, in *Sigismunda*, and was received with great good greeting.

The Rev. Mr. Milner of Hull, whose talents do honour to his situation, and tho' not, like *some others*, a wolf in sheep's clothing, yet was rather too severe that year, 1781, in his Stage Strictures; which stage in fact being authorised by the laws of the land, it is not becoming in a lamb-like pastor of his flock to enter into libel, even bordering on sedition, as some have done, as will be proved, when I arrive at the period to recount the incidents and adventures of 1793,—where I shall be

compelled to be more open in my opinion; and when I come to answer some of the liberties taken by Mr. Garwood and Mr. Dikes of Hull, I will entertain them with a circumstance that occurred in consequence of such doctrine. Such freedoms in a pulpit, whence pure religion only should spring, certainly exceeds the bounds of charity and meekness; and whenever a preacher permits his rancour to pronounce damnation too freely, it is surely being too familiar with the *assumed* knowledge of God's holy purposes.—However, such persuasive orators provide excellent company for the players in the world to come, and as Don Manuel says, “Kings, Lords, and common W * * * *s must die;” therefore Methodism retains all the Birds of Paradise itself, and crams Kings, Peers, Peereesses, Knights, Ladies, Lawyers, and Actors into the pit, all to be unhappy together, to crowd the shades below for the Devil's benefit, while the fanatical enthusiast, full of self-conceit, like Satan, grins horribly aghast. Indeed there are very few instances where tabernacle orators ever carry the marks of benignity or happiness in their features, but on the contrary, a fixed hypocritical gloom proves the heart and mind not so certain of the heavenly passport as they vainly boast, but, like me, a sinner, are fearful of the day of examination, when God's clemency will doubtless soften justice.

Indeed such controversies as the stage and the preachers, much offend many, and does not escape censure, laugh, and contempt from either party; for victory is no more to a certainty obtained by zealous fanaticism and fury, than the poet's lash can convince the evil-minded bigot.—Every piece that honours the Lord is proper for the stage, as Miss Hannah More's "Daniel in the Lion's Den," "Moses in the Bull Rushes," with *corrections* and *alterations*, where the expressions are too solemn and sublime—I do not mean the sacred parts of Holy Writ: But be it observed, the first plays ever acted in this kingdom were in the churches, and all taken from the Bible and New Testament; what is good cannot be out of time and place, whether in a cathedral or in a theatre. Mr. Sheridan may joke on good plays, as in his Critic, but that is no reason that such a whimsical similitude of passages should be understood, that Hamlet's or Cato's soliloquies are ridiculous, because spoken on the stage in the serious representation of character.

As a chronologist I could not possibly avoid the mentioning the Rev. Mr. Milner's name; indeed the peculiarity of that gentleman's recommendation of "St. Ignatius" as a capital play in 1781, and the only one worth the attention of his congregation, makes it unavoidable, without meaning the least offence to so undoubtedly an

inestimable good character, accompanied with talents that would adorn any situation; consequently he commands every respect from me, unaided by compliment or insincerity. For my own part, I utterly abhor and disclaim every intention to offend, but a worm will be irritated at times from crushing enemies when trodden on, and such I must proclaim Mr. Garwood and Mr. Dykes.

It would be easier I believe to make a convert of a violent democrat to an aristocrat, than to make a methodist like the playhouse; but not so arduous a task to make a player love the tabernacle; I have known many instances of the latter: But I never can conceive that abuse, illiberal in the extreme, can flow from true religion, faith, and charity to all mankind. Mr. Milner most certainly did aver in an anxious moment, that the dear Saint Ignatius was highly meritorious and an excellent tragedy. Though certainly if the reader can be prevailed on to read that wonderful most wonderful performance, there needs no gift of prophecy that it will not add to the taste of the Reverend Divine, nor to the credit of the manager who had it acted. For such a frivolous contradiction to common sense, true piety, and grace, never was or can be equalled.

Doctor Young, who needs no eulogium, in the *latter part* of his *life* (so late as 1753) produced

his tragedy of "The Brothers," (to mention the play of "The Revenge" is almost needless,) and Addison, the revered and beloved Addison, desired his heir-at-law to see him on his death-bed, to witness how a Christian could die, and on that occasion did not confess any pangs on his conscience, nor with hypocrisy tremble, and doubt for his having wrote two naughty plays, "Cato" and "The Drummer." Let this teach stubborn Superstition and Spleen to hide their envious and baneful heads, and groan and growl out of sight.

I will readily allow there are many worthless plays—the Bible itself is not without passages which might be expunged, and with *reverence and propriety*; but at the same time be it remembered and observed, that there are many villainous sermons, and sometimes the preacher (like the player) not a whit better or superior to the sermon. Take the bad plays, bad players, bad preachers, and bad sermons, shake them together, and the first that drops will not be worth stooping to take up:—And after all—"An honest man's the noblest work of God." And reader, observe, that when even you meet a true Quaker, you may perchance discover pride, but never, no never the marks of despondency (*which ever glaringly accompany hypocrisy*) to shade the hilarity of a contented heart. A player and his antagonist reminds me

of Gay's song in the Beggar's Opera, which I entreat permission here to insert.

Through all the employments of life
Each neighbour abuses his brother;
Whore and rogue they call husband and wife:
All professions be-rogue one another:
The priest calls the *player* a cheat,
The *player* be-knaves the divine:
And the statesman, because he's so great,
Thinks his trade as honest as mine.

Now this truly respectable character, Mr. Milner, of whom I speak with great esteem, as really a pious man, though at that time hurried into extremes, (and I beg I may be seriously so understood) yet that gentleman did aver in an anxious moment, that not one play was fit to be seen or heard by a Christian, except that divine piece of writing, a tragedy in five acts, called *Saint Ignatius*. The particulars of the said sermon being mentioned to me, and to prove my duty to the public, as manager, also of my adherence to good rules from the pulpit, I sent for the play, but feared on the perusal, I could not by any means prune it fit for stage representation, as it startled me in many places, as bordering on bad, not good example; but as I yielded that matter to the superior judgment of the divine, I pruned it as well as my weak abilities would permit, in order to make it a stage entertainment, and fit to obtain the Lord Chamberlain's license.

Mr. Stephen Kemble was at that time exceedingly ill, and did penance very severely, by undergoing the study of so long a part as St. Ignatius. It was acted on Saturday, December 29, 1781, to a very good house, and many persons at the theatre, whom I believe had never seen a play before, and though so uncommon a production, it not only was attentively and well received, but on the whole rather approved than the contrary.

From Saint Ignatius I must descend to Pantomime, and mention my getting up the entertainment of Robinson Crusoe, as nearly in the manner of London as possible: I had seen it in the Metropolis, the winter previous, at Drury-Lane. Mr. Bailey was excellent in Friday; and it is needless to pay any compliment to Mr. Chalmers as the Harlequin. The Pantomime was greatly received, but cost me in truth a considerable sum; and those motley entertainments are soon destroyed by the conveyance of the scenery from place to place; for if confined to the entertainment of one theatre only, they would never repay one half of the great expence; besides the jealousy of one audience against the other on grounds of disrespect, neglect, partiality, and the frequency of such flip flap surprises, make the experiment very hazardous. Mr. Chalmers that same season produced a Medley Pantomime of Mother Shipton, which did not cost 10l. and

drew more money, and pleased as well as Robinson Crusoe, which had led me to great sums, expecting double returns. But a merchant, well experienced in the vicissitudes of trade, will often meet disappointments, and when on some particular venture he assures his sagacity of *cent per cent.* a whirlwind or a rock engulphs his Mammon, and he must speculate again, and labour hard to redeem his sea-sunk visionary treasure. If variety be a pleasure in life, why I certainly have had a reasonable change of performers, and the likely consequences for and against the theatre.

Miss MARGARET FARREN made her first appearance at York, strongly recommended by her sister, Miss Farren, of Drury Lane, on Tuesday, April 30th, and was loudly welcomed: She is now well known at Bath, and respected as a gentlewoman off the stage, and a great favourite on, particularly in Mrs. Jordan's characters. She is married to Mr. Knight, whose acquaintance is very extensive, and lives in that delightful city, in a very respectable manner, and is esteemed in general by the inhabitants on and off the stage. Mr. and Mrs. Knight's benefits are crowded and fashionable also at Bristol. But Mr. Knight, according to the date I am in, is introduced before his time of etiquette some months. I shall, however, again introduce him to the reader in due form, and with more propriety.

I selected also a second Fête that season,
in which I introduced (in two acts)

THE MUSES' LOOKING-GLASS.

(Written in 1615, and now altered and adapted to the present age.)

BIOGRAPHIA DRAMATICA; or, The Companion to the Playhouse, says,
"This is, perhaps, one of the most estimable and meritorious of all the old plays
"extant. It contains an assemblage of characters, whose height of painting
"would do honour to Shakspeare or Johnson. The language is at the same time
"natural and poetical; the sentiments strong; the satire poignant; and the moral
"both absolutely chaste and clearly conspicuous. In a word, there is nothing
"but the difference of the manners, and the want of intricacy in the plot, that
"can prevent its becoming one of the favourites of the present age."

SCENE THE THEATRE.

Enter MEDIOCRITY.

I am that even course that must be kept
To shun two dangerous gulphs; the middle tract
'Twixt Scylla and Charybdis; the small isthmus
That suffers not the Ægean tide to meet
The violent rage of the Ionian wave.
I am a bridge o'er an impetuous sea;
Free and safe passage to the wary step:
But he whose wantonness or folly dares
Decline to either side, falls desperate
Into a certain ruin.—Dwell with me,
Whose mansion is not plac'd so near the sun,
As to complain of's neighbourhood, and be scorch'd
With his directer beams: nor so remote
From his bright rays as to be situate
Under the icy pole of the cold Bear;
But in a temperate zone: 'Tis I am she,
I am the golden Mediocrity:
The labour of whose womb are all the virtues,

And every passion too, commendable.
Sisters so like themselves, as if they were
All but one birth; no difference to distinguish them
But a respect they bear to several objects:
Else had their names been one, as are their features.
So when eleven fair virgins of a blood,
All sisters, and alike grown ripe of years,
Match into several houses, from each family,
Each makes a name distinct, and all are different.
They are not of complexion red or pale,
But a sweet mixture of the flesh and blood,
As if both roses were confounded there.
Their stature neither dwarf nor giantish,
But in a comely well-dispos'd proportion;
And all so like their mother, that indeed
They are all mine, and I am each of them.
When in the midst of dangers I stand up,
A wary confidence betwixt fear and daring,
Not so ungodly bold, as not to be
Fearful of Heaven's just anger, when she speaks
In prodigies, and tremble at the hazard
Of my religion, shake to see my country
Threat'ned with fire and sword, be a stark coward
To any thing may blast my reputation;
But I can scorn the worst of poverty,
Sickness, captivity, banishment, grim death,
If she dare meet me in the bed of honour;
Where, with my country's cause upon my sword,
Not edg'd with hope or anger, nor made bold
With civil blood, or customary danger;
Nor the fool's whetstone, inexperience;
I can throw valour as a lightening from me,
And then I am the Amazon Fortitude!

Give me the moderate cup of lawful pleasures,
And I am Temperance. Make me Wealth's just steward,
And call me Liberality: With one hand
I'll gather riches home, and with the other,
Rightly distribute 'em, and there observe
The persons, quantity, quality, time, and place:
And if in great expences I be set
Chief arbitress, I can in glorious works,
As raising temples, statues, altars, shrines,
Vestures, and ornaments to religion, be
Neither too thrifty nor too prodigal.
And to my country the like mean observe,
In building ships, and bulwarks, castles, walls,
Conduits, theatres, and what else may serve her
For use or ornament; and at home be royal
In buildings, gardens, costly furniture,
In entertainments free and hospitable,
With a respect to my estate and means,
And then I may be nam'd Magnificence;
As Magnanimity, when I wisely aim
At greatest honours, if I may deserve 'em,
Not for ambition, but for my country's good;
And in that virtue all the rest do dwell.
In lesser dignities I want a name;
And when I am not over-patient,
To put up such gross wrongs as call me coward,
But can be angry, yet in that observe
What cause hath mov'd my anger, and with whom;
Look that it be not sudden, nor too thirsty
Of a revenge, nor violent, nor greater
Than the offence; know my time when, where
I must be angry, and how long remain so;
Then, then you may surname me Mansuetude.

When in my carriage and discourse I keep
 The mean that neither flatters nor offends;
 I am that virtue the well-nurtur'd court
 Gives name, and should do being—Courtesy.
 'Twixt sly dissembling and proud arrogance,
 I am the virtue Time calls daughter, Truth.
 Give me my sword and balance rightly sway'd,
 And Justice is the title I deserve.

When on this stage I come with innocent wit,
 And jests that have more of the salt than gall;
 That move the laughter and delight of all,
 Without the grief of one; free, chaste conceits,
 Not scurril, base, obscene, illiberal,
 Or contumelious slanders, I am then
 The virtue they have term'd Urbanity:
 To whom, if your least countenance may appear,
 She vows to make her constant dwelling here.
 My daughters now are come.—

[Here all the characters are discovered.]

You have seen all my daughters, gentlemen;
 Choose your wives hence: you that are bachelors
 Can find no better; and the married too
 May wed 'em, yet not wrong their former wives.
 Two may have the same wife, and the same man
 May wed two virtues, yet no bigamy:
 He that weds most is chastest. These are all
 The daughters of my womb: I have five more,
 The happy issue of my intellect,
 And thence surnam'd the Intellectual Virtues:
 They now attend not on their mother's train,
 We hope they act in each spectator's brain.
 I have a niece besides, a beauteous one,
 My daughters' dear companion—lovely Friendship,

A royal nymph: her we present not too;
It is a virtue we expect from you.

[*Exeunt.*]

Let me suggest, that were Mrs. Siddons to recite (and act) the speech as here inserted, in the character of *Heavenly Mediocrity*, she would rouse the faculties of eyes and ears, and (if I may be allowed the expression) would infuse a mind where there was none before; and by her matchless powers, would, like magic, make the senseless sensible. Mr. Kemble to play Roscius, would certainly make that piece (well decorated, &c.) a feast of reason for the eye and the ear of every susceptible, unbiassed auditor.

In 1782, the loss of Mr. Bailey was a severe stroke indeed; it severed the main limb of my theatre; he was the support of all the favourite comic pieces: However there was no contending, and patience was a virtue.

Ending York season with "The Agreeable Surprise," after Vanburgh's play of "The Mistake," on Saturday, May 18, 1782, Leeds season commenced, Monday the 20th; for in my circuit we never lose time; scenery, &c. being all ready at each theatre, unless for new pieces. Mr. S. Kemble was also to leave me in a few weeks with the other deserters mentioned, but where he was going, or from what cause I cannot now trace.

the least recollection—but so it was. Mrs. Simpson also left me at Leeds, in June, (I believe for the Bath Theatre)—so I stood in great need of reinforcement.

In my derangement I endeavoured, *A-la-mode Manager*, to induce and seduce from other theatres, and had in that state of emergency the good luck, at the very crisis of losing Bailey, to engage Mr. DANCER, from the Norwich Theatre, who had held the palm of great pre-eminence in that city. He entered with ambition on the fertile fields of Yorkshire.

I now approach a remarkable personage,—THE Mrs. JORDAN suddenly starts upon me at Leeds, that summer in July 1782, with her mother Mrs. G. PHILIPS, Master and Miss FRANCES, her brother and sister, all hand in hand. Much has been said on this adventure, but as an historian of truth, and with every regard to Mrs. Jordan, I will proceed with integrity and friendship.

Mrs. JORDAN, *Leeds, July 1782.*

This lady's first entrance into the York company was rather singular, and the events of her life, since that period, have been marked with very particular adventures and incidents. I have ever entertained a regard for Mrs. Jordan; but speaking the truth, I trust, will little wrong her: we have often been very strong friends, and as often

at whimsical jarrings. It is not only in 1782 I shall have the honour of introducing her, but occasionally, and will extend to 1791, and then I believe I made my rough bow, and the lady not any courtesy; and it is probable that we may never meet again: yet we are so strange, whimsical, and full of agreeable as well as disagreeable surprises, no man can say what *shall* or *shall not* happen.

Now I compliment myself in the assurance, that Mrs. Jordan, when reading any account of herself from me, will not pay me so ill a compliment, as to harbour a moment's thought of my not speaking of her as a friend, though at the same time conscious, that any ungentlemanlike thought or expression from me could never hurt or disgrace her, but fall with contemptible opinion from every worthy mind upon myself.— Now be it known to all men (and all women also) who wish to learn the particulars of Mrs. Jordan's true history, as to her first beginning with me as manager of the York theatre, that early in July 1782, the said young lady, accompanied by her mother, brother, and sister, made a trip from Dublin to Leeds; her mother I recognized as my first Desdemona in Dublin, in Feb. 1758, she then played as Miss G. Philips; her younger sister Miss Philips, who was also at Dublin in 1758, had been some years after in the York company.

(which I have mentioned in my former history) and was then nearly breathing her last in the year 1782. When I first met them at the inn, I cannot say they were so well accoutred, as I could have wished for their sakes or my own. The mamma, like other mamma's, and in particular, ACTRESSES MAMMA's, talked so fulsomely of her daughter's merits, that I was almost disgusted, and very near giving a flat denial to any negotiation; knowing the disagreeable weight of a large family, which with moderate talents, I feared, even with oeconomy, the young lady would not by any means be able to support, I resolved (like being asked to give bail) to be decisive with a negative; and though my theatre was not a palace, only, comparatively, a farm-house to what she has since experienced, yet let me say, what every one feels, that a bowl of milk and brown bread, with eggs and bacon, is good food when hungry, and turtle with fifty other dishes will not taste so rich or so savoury, when gorged daily with dainties. Now reader, had my determined NO been given to Mrs. Jordan at that hurried instant, it might have been unfortunate to her and her dependents, and her fate might by such an unlucky occurrence have been as unhappy, wretched, and precarious as it has in Fortune's wheel been glaringly splendid and astonishingly singular, destitute as she really was of habiliments, her attendants deplo-

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rable, in a strange country, without money, friends, acquaintance, or any possibility of credit. This is no disgrace to Mrs. Jordan: In my memoirs I mentioned fairly my own state, therefore cannot be so despicable in my relation, as meanly to throw any reflection or disgrace upon her. Poverty at that time was her misfortune, not her reproach; and her attention to her parent, brother, and sister, makes, I think, as valuable a picture of sincerity, duty, and honourable affection, as any her more splendid days have yet shewn; and there is not any good fortune can attend her which will not give pleasure to me. But to proceed; on my suddenly seeing the family, I withdrew for half an hour, to reflect on what I should do, fearing a scrape from such a loaded connection and not the least trait of comic powers in the features or manner of the young lady; indeed quite the reverse, dejected, melancholy, tears in the eyes, and a languor, that without the help of words pleaded wonderfully for assistance. On my return to the inn I wished her [to repeat; she evidently gave signs at that instant she was not capable, but wished to merit an engagement by a fair trial on the boards, to which I assented, and after that struggle was over, I called for a bottle of Madeira, and we chatted: They told me all the news from Dublin city, and at last I prevailed on Mrs. Jordan to speak a few lines from Calista.

(the part we had agreed on for her trial-character on the Thursday following :) At the tones of her voice (which for the plaintive and for articulation are, every one must allow, uncommonly good) I felt inwardly surprised and delighted, could not repress my hopes and my compliments; assured her I was lucky in such an acquisition: She, on her part, said, if she could but please me, she did not fear the audience; for Mr. Wilkinson was a man (though a stranger to her) of such well-known honour, that his word and direction should be her guide: she knew if she had merit it would soon be found out by the public; and her diligence, her anxiety to deserve my favour, should be unbounded, and gratitude being her natural good quality, I should ever receive that payment for my kindness to her in her destitute case. And so, reader, we complimented and flattered, and flattered and complimented, till we really found a sudden impulse of regard, and parted that noon with mutual good wishes and assurances.

But now, dear Mrs. Jordan, you do like the cash, and I believe and hope you take care of it; that you love to receive it I know, and so does every other manager; you *have* made us all know that: You will excuse my being jocular.

Well, reader, Thursday the 11th of July arrived: The Fair Penitent was to be acted, not by the

name I had accidentally put into the bills, by *Miss Bland*, but was desired (by her mother) to insert *Miss Frances*; and what was not (nor is not) very common, after the play the song of the Greenwood Laddie by *Miss Frances*: and I do assure the reader, without any flattery to the lady, though I did expect a degree of merit, yet the melody of voice, which, encreased by the repeated applause given, (for the audience had not any sort of expectation) that I was not only charmed, but the public also—and still more at what I feared would spoil the whole, the absurdity of Calista after her death, jumping forth and singing a ballad; but on she came in a frock and a little mob-cap, and sung the song with such effect that I was fascinated—for managers do not always meet with jewels, but when they do, and think the sale will turn out for their own advantage, you cannot conceive, reader, how it makes our eyes sparkle.

Here I set off for York Races, and purposely omit several trifling engagements with performers and immaterial occurrences for a good reason, which like travelling by choice on a bad cross road, where in lieu I might as easily choose a good turnpike, and by that means pursue my rout with despatch, and not be called to an account for my stupidity like a lazy driver, who is reprobated severely for stopping at every hedge-

alehouse, to the neglect of his master's business, when despatch is the life and soul. Therefore with alacrity I will suppose myself pleasantly set down at York theatre, with a lady of fashion in my train—a Lady LEAKE from Norwich, she being from affluence drove to distress, and her husband at that time was under confinement in the King's Bench.

Mr. KNIGHT, a young gentleman of the sock and buskin from the Edinburgh theatre, on whom I had placed great dependence, and had engaged for the ensuing year, and who is now deservedly held in estimation as a gentleman and an actor; but there is often a fatality attends us actors from our own ill direction as to what we are really fit for—that tide of success luckily hit in time, or unluckily neglected, which *leads*, as Shakspeare observes, to *fortune* or to *shoals* and *misfortune*,—so my friend Mr. Knight chose the part of Lothario for his debut; Mrs. Jordan the Calista. But he must not be angry, when I bring to his memory, that he was not well received; and in short my judgment was such to him, as never allowed a possibility of luxury or sunshine, but all his life was to be a *continued rain*, if he followed the stage; and I dare swear he heartily hated me at the time, (which was natural and fair) and almost wished he had never pursued the sock or buskin; which he needed not to have done;

but from choice, as he was of very respectable family and friends in Dorsetshire. However he has to my great satisfaction, as to my auguring so ill, proved and set me down an ass.

A certain gentleman, whose judgment I esteem, (and it would not be for the credit of my own candour and observation if I did not) asserts, that no man, after fifty, is capable of good intellects and taste as to theatrical matters; therefore such old and superannuated opinion would neither be asked or admitted, for at that age he is become so warped and prejudiced with fancied knowledge and the force of first impressions, that the mind is deadened to the force of modern genius and merit. Now if this be so, I must perforce, however unwillingly, conclude, when I admire Mr. Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Miss Farren, or any present performers, who are allowed striking abilities, that I am wrong, and an old doting fool, and know nothing about the matter.

But with my journal I will proceed, and mention that Miss Frances's benefit at Leeds was on Monday August 5, after which on my arrival at York, I ordered the play-bill, with Calista by Miss Frances, but received a note from Mrs. Bland, that for very particular reasons, which she would explain, the name of Frances must be changed and some other adopted. Mrs. Jordan's *own words*, by letter*, were, that my wish as to the

* I have the letters in my possession.

insertion of Bland, could not be complied with, as that name in the prints might probably much injure her in the opinion of her father's relations. So on our meeting, and the matter being explained, there appeared obvious and pressing reasons for such a change of name;—JORDAN was adopted, and a good name it has proved for her credit, and will be remembered with the tribute of honour to her undoubted excellent talents, while the stage is permitted any share in history or conversation. So many various stories have been told and printed, I have judged it neither offensive or wrong on Mrs. Jordan's account, whom I love and esteem, to give the fact as it really was: At that juncture her aunt, Miss Philips, was at York on her death bed; that lady had ever prided herself on family honours, being sprung from the Ap-Griffiths's, the Winny's, and the Aprices of Wales; she was not destitute of good qualities, but had let a fatal error sap her health: She sent earnestly to see her sister, and to embrace her dear niece, whom she then pronounced an honour to the blood of the Ap-Philips's; and as she had plenty of clothes and linen, (at the pawnbrokers) she bequeathed them to her beloved niece, (which under the rose was not at that time by any means unacceptable) and the generous aunt expired the week following, who once esteemed herself the greatest actress on any stage.

But what is greatness? The National Assembly will say *Equality*; Lord Grizzle in Tom Thumb asks himself that question, and solves it thus—
“Greatness is a Monmouth-street laced coat, to-day on my back, to-morrow on another’s;”—
like the Guillotine in France, where to-day it falls on an old Priest’s neck, the next on a Member of their own Convention, and the third on a feeble impoverished old woman’s.

Mrs. Jordan acted Rutland and the Romp, in the race-week; Mr. Smith of Drury-Lane Theatre was at the play, not only that night, but every one she acted: He assured me he was so much struck with her performance, that it made me secretly rejoice in her being articulated, in the which I gave her the first terms, also an extraordinary benefit after York race-week; for her services were truly valuable, and she not only wanted but truly deserved every encouragement, for she had her heavy family to support, and that at a time when every day led to an increase, not a decrease in her dependants. The article being settled at Leeds, I was less alarmed at whatever flourishes Mr. Smith might give in London on his arrival, relative to my new theatrical acquisition.

LADY LEAKE made her appearance that race-week at York, in the part of Amelia in “The English Merchant,” on Tuesday the 20th of

August.—Her Ladyship had so little doubt of her own abilities, that when rehearsing that noon, she called to me in a hurry, saying, “Mr. Wilkinson, pray come and hear me! for my voice sounds like a bell!” but at night the bell had lost all vibration: Her rank and pitiable situation prevented marks of disapproval; and never departed an audience more willingly than on that night: Her Ladyship was unwillingly convinced that stage approbation was never likely to be her lot, and wisely gave up so vain an attempt.

Mr. and Mrs. POWELL from Bath, also made their appearance: He acted Lord Falbridge the night of “The English Merchant,” and was deservedly well received; she also was a good figure, sung very prettily, and was of great *utility*, (a word Mrs. Knight of Bath observes I am particularly attached to) and could not displease on any stage; her appearance was in Cecilia in “The Son-in-Law.” They continued some two or three years, and when I come to mention the time of their departure, I shall not do Mr. Powell justice, unless I pay him the compliment he deserves, and acknowledge that I have lamented his loss.

Mrs. Jordan was much admired that week in Arionelli. A Mr. Tyler had personated that character, and with a degree of deserved credit; but Mrs. Jordan was not only new, but an object

to the public, and to me, as she greatly helped my coffers: However Mr. Tyler (not wisely) gave me warning on that account, and suddenly left me to warble Arionelli at Scarborough.

Mr. Knight, the gallant, gay *Lothario*, was rather in the dumps, but soon recovered, and convinced me of my error, in passing a wrong sentence on his abilities from one unlucky accident. Indeed he soon became a great favourite; and in drunken scenes, particularly in Charles in "The Jealous Wife," and Spatterdash in "The Young Quaker," was superior to any actor I have yet seen: He is now in a more extensive line; and besides playing many characters with discrimination and justice, attended with applause, he is particularly happy at the Bath Theatre, where he performs Edwin's cast of characters in low comedy.

The reader will find I abounded, that race-week, with novelty, as I also introduced two very promising performers, Mr. and Mrs. MARSHALL, as singers: She had a good voice, was very handsome, and shewed to view a brilliant pair of eyes, with a remarkable set of fine teeth; which she did not neglect to keep in full view. Mr. Marshall was a very genteel figure, sung very pleasingly, and promised well as an actor, which promise he has performed, and has been received in a very respectable light at Covent-Garden, Bath, and I believe, the New York Theatre.

Mrs. HOPKINS of Drury-Lane, was at York that week, and wondered she was not solicited to play!—looking down, I dare say, on Mrs. Jordan, never imagining she would so soon take the lead, and in such a rapid and wonderful manner, as she has done in London, and here, there, and every where. However, Mrs. Hopkins, who was on a visit to her brother and sister, (a Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson of York) was engaged to perform two or three nights: (I need not add, she is mother to Mrs. John Kemble :) Her first part was Mrs. Malaprop, on Saturday, August 24, 1782.

Mrs. Smith swelled with indignation, and the constant Green-Room phrase, was, "Pray when, "Ma'am, is your benefit? and when is yours, for "I see Mrs. Jordan begins with one on Wednesday next?"—And to be sure, if it had not been for my support, she could not have surmounted her difficulties; for by her success, which they attributed to my partiality, not allowing any degree of superior merit to the hated Jordan, she must have sunk under it, for her spirits were never violent, unless when scolding the manager, and with an empty pocket: Her situation, her uncommon labour and study for the Theatre, and so many mouths, whose food were dependent on her bounty, must make the reader feel for her, pity and praise, and rejoice at her good stars and reverse of fortune, then when really the hum-

and I believe the New York Theatre

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the *Nella*. I made it my study to preserve her as much as possible from insult and the sneers of envy and malignity, and introduced her to our critic, Mr. Cornelius Swan, of York, who said he would teach her to act; and when Mrs. Jordan has been ill, he was admitted to the little bed-chamber, where, by the side of the bed, with Mrs. Bland's old red cloke round his neck, he would sit and instruct his pupil in Hill's character of Zara. I remember his urging me to revive that tragedy, and act *Lusignan*, which I complied with—"For really *Wilkinson*," said he, "I have given the *Jordan* but three lessons, and she is so adroit at receiving my instructions, that I declare she repeats the character as well as Mrs. Cibber ever did; nay, let me do the *Jordan* justice, for I do not exceed, when with truth I declare, *Jordan* speaks it as well as I could myself."—Well said Cornelius!—He was certainly a friend to Mrs. Jordan, but he did not abound with sincerity; he declared he adopted her as his child, but did not prove a tender fond parent, for at his death he did not leave her a shilling: He was a man of understanding, but I cannot boast of his generosity, or his integrity; indeed he was specious to a degree almost incredible.

But in order not to detain the reader or myself at York, it is high time to pack up bag and baggage, and proceed, not with solemn march, but

as quick as possible for merry Wakefield, early in September, 1782, and from thence to Doncaster; therefore the reader is not long detained on the road. While at Doncaster, I was informed that the Sheffield Theatre had fallen into such bad repute, no rent paid, and a bad set of players; so I really imagined the good credit I had left in July 1781, when they truly saw a good company, as the list I have published proves; and my self-vanity and consequence doubled all this in my weak imagination; therefore I engaged the Sheffield Theatre for five or six weeks, taking the additional journey from Doncaster to Sheffield, which incurred a very considerable expence; a circumstance little attended to in the brains of Theatrical Generals, till the day of payment makes them feel. Any person out of the theatre will readily comprehend when he reflects that an extraordinary payment for waggons, the new tax on the company and manager for forty miles, not in the usual rout, and added to these points a heavy rent to pay, requires taxes being laid on the new acquired town: For unless the subsidies are paid willingly and cheerfully, the territory of the mock monarchy may be enlarged, but the treasury not fuller of bullion than the year before with its simple easy estate. For when we look for riches from extension of empire, we forget the expence

of paying for more territory: This was my case exactly at Sheffield; for there I failed on my second expedition, like other commanders who are too sanguine, fierce, and secure at the onset. The houses were miserably bad indeed. All my novelty, with a good company of comedians, aided with Mrs. Jordan's excellence, would not avail. Her benefit, though patronised, was very indifferent: My own night only *thirty-six pounds*! and the common receipts frequently did not exceed *eight, ten, and twelve pounds a night*! On the whole, as well as I can recollect, (not having the accounts by me now at Hull) I cleared the amazing sum of *twenty-six pounds*! Perhaps they were not in the humour that season to support their theatre or the York company. Indeed that appears very evident, and reminds me, that the humour of an audience and that of human life, bears a strong resemblance to the titles of two plays—"Every Man in his Humour," and "Every Man out of his Humour." The first inclination, to me, is the most agreeable.

As this is a true account, I certainly, in point of obligation, am not a debtor to Sheffield: Not that I mean to speak disrespectfully of so populous and flourishing a town, or that I should at any time dislike to pay my respects there, but on the contrary, be happy to deserve their approbation, and also feel the true effect of such appro-

bation, by compassing their cash; but if they did not give me any, they would despise me for acknowledging favours they did not bestow.

Before I quit that year's account of my Sheffield expedition, an incident has just popped into my head, which had nearly deprived the audience of that town, London of its pride, and every town of great entertainment. The opera, called "The Fair American," was acted on Friday, October 18, 1782: Mr. Knight was a footman in that opera, and Mrs. Jordan acted the chambermaid, in which character she had great merit. In a scene between the two characters, where they were discovered at tea, a heavy scene, that which is in general termed a curtain scene, and a roller of immense weight, gave way, and at one crash fell from the top *close* to the feet of Mr. Knight and Mrs. Jordan; had it struck on the head of either, (or any head—MY OWN EXCEPTED) think it must have been immediate death.

It is worthy notice, that his Grace of Norfolk, that Sheffield season, gave a prediction of Mrs. Jordan's merit; and his Grace has ever been an honourable friend to her from that time to the present.

Without a heavy purse, that is to speak the truth, and declare without any loss or any gain, we all left Sheffield, for Kingston-upon-Hull.

Mr. BARRETT (now of the Hay-Market in the summer, and Manchester in the winter) was added, and played several comic characters with approbation; particularly I recollect the Jew in "The Young Quaker," and Crazy in "Peeping Tom of Coventry."

Mrs. Jordan did not make her appearance at Hull till so late as Thursday, December 26, in Calista, and sung the "Greenwood Laddie." A great house was secure, as I gave a new Pantomime; for while she could not act, many incendiaries had been cruelly busy, to represent her in colours not fit for description: A proof of her merit, else such indefatigable pains to injure and depress, had not been taken. However, it so far succeeded, that her reception was cool, her performance was in consequence naturally languid and void of spirit, and her song of the "Greenwood Laddie," which she sung whimsically and excellently, *was hissed!*—It was some time before her merit got the better of inveteracy; for so far malevolence reigned from the jaundiced eyes, occasioned by the insinuations of the *Scandal Club*, that it was long before the prejudice and mist was cleared; but when it once was dispelled, their sights were restored and made perfect, and they disliked the physicians who had blinded them, and determined to be in future their own judges. Mrs. Jordan was from such a lucky and deserved

resolve, lifted up to what she merited, and Slander was mute.

Now reader, do not suppose that any person or persons in my company were or are *remarkable* for painting in dark colours; but it is really wonderful, where self-interest is concerned, how people in general are apt to feel, and tell the depreciating side of a character, particularly where self-success is in the least concerned: Even so with an enthusiastic preacher, *black and all black*.

Mrs. Jordan's establishment at Hull being settled, I have no more particulars to add, than that a good season enabled me to return to the York campaign, 1783, where almost all the performers mentioned had made their appearance, and Mrs. Jordan and all were well received.

March the 10th, Miss ELIZABETH KEMBLE, (now Mrs. Whitlock) made her appearance in Selima: She was then possessed of great marks of merit, though wild as a colt untamed: But what will not the vicissitudes of a theatre tame! she was then in full health, youth, and spirits. She had acted Portia, &c. that winter at Drury-Lane, 1783, which was the season Mrs. Siddons left Bath, and held the London world as her followers, and raised the price of salts and hartshorn, "*Which nobody can deny.*"

Miss Kemble did not continue longer than June; since that she has wielded the sceptre, as queen of the Newcastle Theatre.

Mr. Knight daily improved, so did Dancer that winter; and except a little pique and jealousy with the ladies (which prevented indisposition, and made them do their best)—all was well from one o'clock at noon, till one in the watchman's cloudy morning: Indeed all was so well, that I must suddenly close the York season without any complaints before the curtain or behind it, and proceed quickly to Leeds season, 1783; there Mr. LA MASH, from the Edinburgh Theatre, made an engagement for the year (*but did not continue so long*)—He acted Jessamy, the Apprentice, West Indian, &c.

Mr. WARD, now manager of the Manchester Theatre, and Mrs. BADDELEY, came both from Edinburgh about the same time: They first acted at the York Spring Meeting; as on Mrs. Baddeley's novelty I judged it worth my attention to quit Leeds for that week, which happened about three weeks after the opening.

Mrs. Baddeley acted Clarissa, Polly, Rosetta, Imogen, and several of her principal characters, and with great attention to her business: Whoever remembers that very agreeable actresses, singer, and handsome face, will not wonder at her being much admired at York; but the last night she almost lost her credit entirely. She was very lame, and to make that worse, was so stupidly intoxicated with Laudanum, that it was with great

difficulty she finished the performance. It was for her own benefit. The quantity of Laudanum she indulged herself with was incredible; and though very little food approached her lips, her complexion retained its beauty to the last.

Mr. Ward acted Posthumous, Lord Foppington, and several of his principal characters, and was well received. Mr. Ward has a good person, and a great share of spirit and vivacity.

The company returned to Leeds, where Mr. Ward and Mrs. Baddeley were to perform four or five nights; but what with illness, laziness, and inebriety, I was never certain of Mrs. Baddeley's performance from one night to the other; so she sunk into neglect and contempt. What she did with her cash I could never make out or comprehend, for she received very genteel payment from me; and when she was to return to Scotland, was in truth reduced to beggary, not worth a single shilling. Her friend and companion, a *Mrs. Stell*, was with her, who I fancy had always occasion for such sums as that unfortunate woman received.

I remember Mrs. Baddeley in her chariot; and it is well known she had lived not only in ease and affluence, but actually in splendor and voluptuousness; but she soon after her engagement at Leeds, died a prey to disease and poverty at Edinburgh; no hand to close her eyes, nor a

single mind to regret her loss: Indeed she was better out of the world than in it; and her last situation and dying moments, though dreadful, were better than a lingering existence, must have been in a workhouse, or on a dunghill, for she had worn out the hand of melting Charity by never-ceasing applications; but the kind hearts of the Edinburgh company, to their great credit, exhausted their own little stock to prevent her absolutely starving, and procured something like an interment, with a poor coffin, which, but for their laudable humanity, she must have wanted. Indeed players in general, *when truly poor*, will part with their little to relieve a brother or sister actor or actress when in distress.

My memory rushes on me with information of omissions material, relative to the proceedings of the spring and summer incidents of 1783: First at York, "*Rosina*" was produced, written by Mrs. Brooks, wife of the Rev. Mr. Brooks, who was curate to my father at the Savoy, 1755, 56, and 57; they both departed this life about five years since. "*Marian*" was also a production of that lady's. Mrs. Brooks had a better informed mind than body: For the one was truly good, the other very partial; and each eye was evidently contradicting the other, which rather gave an uncouth, as well as an unfavourable idea to a stranger at first sight; but she was truly

a good, sensible, agreeable, and well-bred woman. This Mrs. Brooks's opera of "Rosina" I had in April 1783, for my benefit. Mrs. Jordan was the William; and such a William (though I have seen many good ones) I have not beheld since. That farce was then of material service to me; it is still living on the catalogue, and is so pure, I think no enemy to the stage will ever pronounce its damnation. Also on the Saturday night, in the race-week 1783, I have omitted Mr. BUTLER's obliging me with acting Sir Peter Teazle. Mr. Butler is a rival manager: Like the French troops, he seized on my neighbouring territories at Beverley. He is, without compliment, as far as my knowledge can with truth ascertain, or without the least right to doubt, a very honest man, indefatigable in his endeavours, and deserves the esteem and the good will with which he is in general supported.

"Rosina" was that year of particular service at Leeds, York Races, Wakefield, Doncaster, and Hull; but it must not be omitted to mention, ("Let honour with desert be crowned,") that Mrs. Jordan was the grand supporter and means of that success.

At Leeds that summer 1783, it is astonishing I should have omitted so very extraordinary a circumstance, as not to enter on record, that Mr. Dancer, who had gone on with every imaginable

good reception and reward from the public, and who seemed remarkably attentive to his theatrical labour, was (without any cause whatever that could be ascribed) on Sunday, July 20, seized with a violent madness, which continued to so alarming and increasing a degree, that the York Asylum was the only possibility of relief, where he was carried to from Leeds; a place where every care and comfort is administered, and which aided by judgment and attention can be afforded. For the honour of York, and the nation at large, the York asylum, now nobly established, is certainly owing to the indefatigable and unremitting care and attention of Dr. Hunter, who to his praise be it given, is the founder and conductor of that charitable and needful institution to take the wretched in; and there I must leave to his care Mr. Dancer for the present, under a proper regimen.

After the race week which followed Mr. Dancer's misfortune, I gave a benefit for the support of his wife and daughter, who were left destitute: Indeed no place is more to be noted for the annals of good and benevolent acts, in the time of poverty or misfortune, than the ancient city of York.

Wakefield season not having any adventure or incident, I will set the reader and myself down after a good dinner and an afternoon's nap, at the

elegant and comfortable town of Doncaster, where if they cannot boast, like London, that "all the streets are paved with gold, and all the "folks are witty," yet this said town of Doncaster can, without being contradicted, assert boldly, that they have worthy inhabitants, and their streets are well, aye, elegantly paved, and as admirably lighted; and all these conveniences are at that pleasant place enjoyed, without the taxes being levied on each door, the corporation being as generous as rich: Can Londoners, with all their superiority, proclaim the same advantages with truth—Not that I say they have neither pavements nor lamps—But who pays the piper? Why, the London inhabitants; but at Doncaster it is the benevolent corporation.

At Doncaster, 1783, Mr. and Mrs. MILLS made their first appearance from Edinburgh. On Wednesday, September 24, in the race week, Mr. Mills made his first flourish in Sir Anthony Absolute; and Mrs. Mills the 3d of October in Arpasia. The lady had been well received in London, at Drury-lane theatre, the winter before, in Imogen in the play of Cymbeline; and by the course of Life's running sand, which causes various vicissitudes of fortune, she is now become *bone of one bone, and flesh of one flesh* to young Mr. Fawcett, and is still youthful and fertile.

Mr. Mills was a truly good actor, "take him "for all in all," when he was cool; but he often "let an enemy into his mouth to steal away his "brains." In the course of my narrative I would not be just unless I mentioned his services, and his excellencies; and it is the more necessary, as I know the winter prior to his engagement with me, at Covent Garden theatre, at the time of onset and the day of trial, he was assailed from the climate with a bad cold, and to make it better, he armed himself with weapons mete for defence, which assailed him even to the death of opinion with the London audience. The actor was certainly to blame, not the audience.

Mrs. Mills, of all the persons who ever entered a theatre, knew how to render universal advantage to the manager; and added to what she could do, she ever had a mind that led her to make ready use of that power of utility she possessed then, (and does still) for the service of the theatre; nay, I have known from her readiness to oblige, that she has incurred the abuse and sneer of many, as on benefits, where individuals were served as well as the manager; In short, I should enter into fulsome panegyric were I to do no more than justice to the numberless good actions and sleepless nights she must have undergone for the service of our state—and should hold myself unworthy and ungrateful, did I not

here pay a just tribute and acknowledge more anon: For from the year 1783, I have many a course, with shiftings and windings, to take before I have done with my tragedy, comedy, pastoral, farcical actresses; for she really was ready for every thing; her study was rapid, her will was great; in short, for the laws of wit and humour, she was my only woman.

In the autumn I determined to have a third touch at Sheffield, notwithstanding my having lost 30l. by my first attempt at the races in June 1781; yet Mr. Blonk who was and is the steward for the proprietors, urged they could not give away the playhouse: I equally answered, I could not afford such destruction of my own property, and that if I quitted my usual circuit, it must be for the hopes of profit, or why should I go to Sheffield. I was very sensible Sheffield was capable to make crowded houses if they pleased; and though I boasted of a truly reputable and good company received with credit and sanction at Edinburgh, York, and Hull, yet that would not command or insure success.

On that *third* visit I observed, that until I obtained the encouragement I aimed at, I could not afford more than 70l. for five weeks, nor could I prudently continue longer, unless real profit was the temptation; but if it answered better than the year before, to shew I was not

mercenary, I would, if the proprietors of Sheffield theatre required it, divide the profits above the rent; which certainly was an offer neither of the wisest nor most prudent kind—To which I received the following lines from Mr. Blonk.

“SIR,

SHEFFIELD, *June 26, 1783.*

“Having not the honour of your acquaintance, you will excuse a stranger’s offering you his candid sentiments. I would then inform you, that your proposal to share the profits would be derogatory both to you and them, and would in my opinion injure the receipts of the house. The proprietors do not wish to reap the fruit of your labour; the more plentiful the harvest you have, the more pleasing to them—Gain is not their motive, there not being one that the dividend is an object to. That we can fill the boxes here you have had a specimen, for at no prior time have those benches been so patronised as the last season.

“BEN. BLONK.”

I therefore entered that theatre once more as manager, at the rent of 70*l.* for five weeks.

October 13, “The Jealous Wife” and “Love A-la-Mode,” 11*l.* 2*s.*

Second play, with Mrs. Jordan’s “Romp,” 6*l.* 9*s.*

“Belles Stratagem” and “Rosina,” 8*l.* 2*s.*

However dreadful as that was, the houses mended: Mrs. Jordan's benefit, October 24, "Myſterious Huſband" and "The Son-in-Law," 511.

My benefit, deſired by my often mentioned and much eſteemed General St. Leger, Tueſday, Nov. 11, "As You Like It," when I acted Jaques, alſo Bayes in "The Rehearſal," in three parts, which had never been performed there. I was favoured alſo with a conſiderable party from Cheſterfield, at the requeſt of Mr. and Mrs. Sitwell, my patrons. Mr. Holmes, then Mayor of Doncaſter, Mr. and Mrs. Woodcock and many others came on that occaſion, in order that my night might not appear ſo ſhabby as it had done my other two mentioned benefits. In ſhort, Mr. Peach's houſe, that night, was like a public race night, and he had not beds ſufficient for the demand; yet the receipt was only 60l. 4s.—for which I then thought myſelf obliged, and here acknowledge the favour.

Obſerve, kind reader, that at thoſe benefits at Sheffield, or any where, I never take more than half; ſo in the account it ſtands thus—Mr. Wilkinſon's benefit, 60l. 4s.—Mr. Wilkinſon's ſhare, 30l. 2s. the other half ſerving for payments. So on the total account it ſtood thus—Received 686l. 14s.—Paid 632l. 7s.

I inquired of Mr. Ward, the printer, whether I might expect to lease the theatre, as the best mode I thought then, and do still? The answer was—"No!"—I next asked Mr. Ward if I might depend upon the theatre another year? He told me they never determined that till on a full meeting of the directors, the first week in May. I then (after having sent the rent by my treasurer) desired Mr. Ward at that meeting, to assure the proprietors, if they judged my profits of 54*l*. 7*s*. immense and too much, I requested he would, in my name, add 10 guineas, if the proprietors chose to accept it. And indeed I judged my profits very inconsiderable, as I sent them an exact copy of the whole expences and receipts. I also flattered myself my great punctuality of paying every bill, no matter how trifling (in that town) *weekly*, was the best and surest foundation for lasting harmony and mutual dependence betwixt us. Time advanced, 1784, when I wrote to Mr. Blonk, to know if I might expect the theatre the ensuing season, and was at last favoured with the following laconic epistle.

"SIR,

"Send half your profits of last season, due to the proprietors, and you will then receive an answer.

"BLONK."

SHEFFIELD, Aug. 1784.

How far that was an honourable behaviour, or even less, I leave that gentleman, and the proprietors themselves to judge, without requesting general observation, or the presumption of offering my own opinion. I only beg permission to make one remark, which is to ask, that if any gentleman concerned in trade, was not to receive as profit, even the rent of their hall or shop for the reception of merchandize, would they think it a payment adequate for the rent they paid? So had my profits been 70*l.* instead of 54*l.*—how could such an insignificant sum be thought too much? Here I drop the subject, with every wish for the prosperity of the town, the trade, and the proprietors of Sheffield Theatre, but certainly I was indebted to Mr. Blonk's good manners—"A Rowland for his Oliver."

Had the theatre continued at Sheffield, under my rule, they would have seen some good acting; as in the spring 1784, when "The Poor Soldier" made its appearance, and in which Mrs. Jordan was truly of great service; nor will it be wondered at whenever she is seen in that character in London. Indeed the Poor Soldier did great matters in every theatre, and would have done equally well that season, had I been admitted to Sheffield; but for want of a good company, and never having seen the farce at Sheffield, as it was then acted by the York company, they thereby lost a feast,

and have never yet properly known what "The Poor Soldier" really was, when acted as at that period, 1784.

Now once more to Hull for the season, 1783. The reader will either be tired with travelling so repeatedly the same road, and surfeited, or on the contrary, become so familiar, and at home with the Yorkshire manager and his agreeable company of comedians, that he will know every inch of the road, and be so perfectly at ease, that without any consultation of what is right to be done, or at least fear of any molestation from thieves, robbers, highwaymen, or footpads, they will either look out for their diversion, or rather, I fear, be inclined to fall asleep in my dull travelling caravan: However, be the vehicle dull, stupid, or tolerable, for the entertainment of strangers, I beg we may be supposed fairly set down at Hull, to commence my siege on the purses of the inhabitants, and to exhort or extort, provisions for all my theatrical corps, consisting of men, women, and children: For be it known that my ladies breed oftener than suits my inclination, as my pocket feels the effects of ladies when they are *in the straw*, adding to the live-stock of his majesty and liberty. But these lying's-in make me melancholy, so I will leave the subject, and proceed to theatrical business.

Mrs. Jordan deservedly kept her ground.— Mrs. Smith also preserved her estimation, but not in very good humour; for that Mrs. Jordan's good fortune, (like Lucy in the Beggar's Opera,) run in her head strangely. Miss Margaret Farrow, I had also forgot to mention, left me for Ireland, in the autumn, 1782.

I give these mistakes as they happen, lest the elegance of the diction should make the observant reader wonder I should make such errors and repeated mistakes.

Mrs. WARD, a niece of Mrs. Sweeny's, or Mrs. Bland's, or Mrs. Hamilton's, call her which you please, was engaged that year: She was not handsome, but well made. Mr. Ward was a musician and behaved as civil to his lady as a gentleman should do, to deserve the name of a *good-natured husband*. She had a great emulation and pride to sport her legs in small clothes against the Jordan, to whom she had an implacable hatred. At Sheffield the wish to retard Mrs. Jordan's success with the audience was so studied, violent, and resolved, that they would in groups sit at the stage doors to disconcert her, and prevent her doing justice to the parts she had undertaken: To prevent such manifestly cruel, and dastardly behaviour, on the nights the use of the stage doors could be dispensed with, I ordered padlocks, to prevent all such cabals and disorderly

meetings, contrary to my act of parliament. The glaring hint served like a proclamation, it made them see and feel that the grossness of their envy and ill behaviour was flagrant, and answered only to expose themselves, and they relaxed for their own credit; and though they would not own it, must have inwardly felt self-convicted and ashamed. These littleneſſes of the human mind, I fear, is not entirely confined to a theatre, but is too often in ſome degree practiſed in the palace, and even in the pulpit, without omitting the cottage.

Mrs. Jordan, whether from a mind being hurt really at ſuch inſult, or by way of ſecret revenge on her rival, would frequently have her eyes ſo ſqueezed and red, and have the little drop-beads trickle on her firſt appearance, ſo as to impede her ſpeech, as often cauſed inquiry whether Mrs. Jordan was ill, or what could poſſibly be the matter; and when Mrs. Jordan gained the proper opportunity for retaliation, ſhe muſt have been more or leſs than woman, not to have re-torted on her avowed enemy.

We had a very good ſeaſon at Hull that winter, 1783; no forage cut off by any enemy, and the market at Hull never wants plenty or variety of the beſt proviſions; ſo after our Chriſtmas cheer, we cloſed the ſeaſon with a great houſe for Mr. and Mrs. Smith; but ſtill they were not happy.

In 1784, Mr. and Mrs. Brown were engaged. I need not mention Mr. Brown as the Harlequin at Covent-Garden, in the winters 1786 and 1787.

In 1786 Mrs. Brown was lured by the London manager to leave Norwich for Covent-Garden, in the middle of the manager's season, and to the infinite prejudice of his Norwich campaign (Mrs. Brown being a great favourite)—but what matters that, when the great call on the little, it must be obeyed. Nor murmur, oh, my soul!—she was called to exert all her courage, and combat Mrs. Jordan, whose great success in London was so astonishingly rapid as unexpected. Whether Mrs. Brown was not properly supported by the manager or Mr. Town, or that the fault lay on one or both, or the performer, is not for me to decide: Mrs. Brown I believe did not doubt as to victory; but she forgot what an audience *never* will, and that was, that Mrs. Jordan at that time was *very young*, an article for superiority which few performers confess, but believe not one but would be glad to be forty years of their lives at the animating powers of twenty-five, and the other twenty to keep in possession the full vigour of thirty—but were that pleasing idea possible to be realised, which I can only enjoy in fancy, I am of Shakespear's opinion, who says—

“There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

“Rough-hew them how we will.”

And Mrs. Brown did not (or *would not*) see that Mrs. Jordan had caught the ball she was blindly running after. And it is certain that the said Mrs. Brown, of whom I am now speaking, did not decrease the fame of her antagonist, the *Mendoza Tomboy* of Drury-Lane : But allowing superiority; from what circumstance it is owing I cannot conjecture, and think it strange that Mrs. Brown has never yet made an establishment. She certainly possesses great merit in *particular characters*, and much more so on some nights of performance than that of others, though in the very same characters. That all performers of the Sock and Buskin are liable to the like failure is certain, as health, humour, difference of reception may naturally occasion various alterations; but so frequent as in the acting of Mrs. Brown I never noticed, either in the town or the country performers. I will venture to affirm, that when the audience at London had seen Mrs. Brown a few-nights, if she had acted Wowiski, Old Keckfey, and though last not least, Old Dorcas in Cymon*, she would have been an established favourite in the metropolis to this day,—but the audience should on the same nights have been familiarized to see her in a girl or chambermaid, to have given strength to the great effect of contrast.

* Mrs. Brown's Wowiski and Dorcas, are superior (as to the acting, dressing, &c.) to any one I have seen any where.

I hope my reader, if female, will not be angry at my wishing to have popped Mrs. Brown into Old Kecksey, and have made her wear the breeches: I beg pardon for saying breeches—*small clothes* I mean; but when I was a young man they were vulgarly called *breeches*, and it was not uncustomary for ladies then, nor indeed now, for the ladies on the stage, to wear what I call breeches. Indeed I have heard that many ladies, married ones in particular, both then and now, liked, and still like to wear them *what-d'ye-call-ums*; but no no, it cannot be, it cannot be—for no female would ever wish to govern a husband, tho' many husbands are as docile as their wives; but as to my authenticity on that delicate point I will not answer, as I am truly unhappy to find and feel, to my great regret, that not only memory fails, but that I daily perceive myself growing more and more deficient in every respect; tho' as Mrs. Inchbald says,—“*Provisions are scarce.*”

Like a modern building, I am so unstable, that one strong blast of January will cut me through and through—therefore I do not cajole myself with the false hopes of the attainment much beyond the autumn of life—no lusty winter—but prophecy, that if renovated in health, with its necessary attendants, should not object to live, please God, and smile at my auguring. But hav-

ing had several taps at the door, like warnings from a hard-hearted landlord to a trembling tenant, makes me take the hint that I have had more than Mrs. Thrale allows, her number being limited to *three*.

The seasons at Leeds, till 1784, had been so slack and cool, that I had despaired of what has come to pass, that Leeds would one day prove itself a theatrical mine, and produce that ore of all ores, the brightest and purest, which is gold.

The Bath company perform at Bristol on every Monday evening, from November till the end of May, and when an unlucky accident occurs, like the following, the distress must be very whimsical, disagreeable, and unavoidable. The Saturday before York races, 1784, I had appointed three pieces, for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Brown to advantage; one of the three was "The Devil to Pay," Sir John Loverule by Mr. Brown, who was, by an unlucky slip, prevented from stirring from Leeds, where he was in health, when he closed on the Friday, and was to open at York Theatre the Saturday following; his ankle was strained to so violent a degree, that he could not move but with assistance: The performers not concerned in the bill of fare for that evening, did not intend being at York till the Sunday.—Mr. Henderson was at the York Theatre that unfortunate Saturday, and when he returned to Lon-

don and was received with welcome in the Green-Room, the performers asked what whimsical adventures had occurred during his northern travels. He said nothing worth claiming their attention, except one curious anecdote at the York Theatre, which was the seeing "The Devil to Pay" acted *without* a Sir John Loverule; which was no more than asserting a strict truth: For Brown's misfortune prevented his appearing in that character; and the accident not being known at York till the play was to begin, no resource was left but getting through as well as they could, and a wretched maimed performance it was. I did not get to York, nor was acquainted with the disaster till all the night's ceremony was finished. Mr. Henderson was so hurt at viewing the business of the stage in so perplexed a state, that it was a principal reason for his not entertaining the public the week following. Indeed the terms he asked were very exorbitant, and it was lucky for me he did not perform that race-week; as the meeting was very numerous, and the theatre well attended, without the drawback of a certain stipulated sum for the Londoner.

Such an accident as the late mentioned one relative to Mr. Brown, must occasion great uneasiness on a Monday's play at Bristol, if it never has happened it may, but hope for the manager's sakes it never will.

Mrs. Jordan was in high favour at that time at York as a settled performer; and when after engaged for the metropolis, dare swear, she trembled for her success, and never dreamed of equipage and splendor.

Mrs. SMITH might truly be said to be, as before observed, well in merit, well in friends and prosperity, possessed of situation, &c.; but she certainly was an evil genius to herself. Performers should consider, that self-love, however predominant and hereditary to our natures, must yield at times to the love the audience have for novelty, without which they never will be pleased or satisfied. But I grant it requires great resolution to subdue, as it more or less inhabits the breasts of universal creation.

I am the more particular in mentioning Mrs. Smith's comfortable situation with me, as a jealous eagerness of duty at that juncture in September, was of fatal consequence to her future health and welfare; but I may be, and hope I am mistaken, for she toiled hard in my vineyard and earned her reward. At that time she was in such a situation as women wish to be who love their lords; but fearing her indignant rival Jordan should be prepared at that period in any one of her characters, Mrs. Smith assured me she would wield her pike, and be on duty for three months longer, when it was but a very few

days after that assurance, that she was compelled from force irresistible to lay down her arms and be stript of all her accoutrements, and her place was supplied for some time by Mrs. Jordan, who was as happy as the other was unhappy; for she figured away in Emmeline, Lady Racket, Lady Bell, Lady Teazle, Lady Alton, Indiana, &c. the termed property of Mrs. Smith. And Mrs. Jordan was not then fatigued with a little thing, but liked to have both her hands full, as is pretty evident, when the reader is informed, that she actually studied all those characters from play night to play night, was constantly in the farces, and played in all with unremitting zeal; but unfortunately for me and herself she was the bucket that would soon go down, from the same cause that her opponent's bucket would soon rise; for which Mrs. Smith was so eager, (though a woman in every respect of delicacy and strict good behaviour) that she would, against all persuasion, though a very remarkable wet September, in a short time after her lying in, walk in a damp garden to get strength for her Sheffield journey of eighteen miles from Doncaster, which was on the 13th of October, and her confinement only took place October 2. She pleased herself in performing her journey it is true, but the consequence was a fixed lameness in her hip, which I was told threatened fatal consequences. I by no

means wished her to make her appearance till more recovered, but so eager was she to be on the boards, that act she would, and act she did, and though as lame as Mrs. Amlet, would not suffer Mrs. Jordan to appear in Fanny, but limped and hopped more than myself in Lord Ogleby. It was in vain to remonstrate—I said there is no occasion—do not appear Madam—here comes the *Jordan*; but we will suppose that she replied like Cleopatra,

Were she the sister of the thundering Jove,
And bore her brother's light'ning in her eyes,
Thus would I meet my rival.

And a bad meeting it was for me and herself, for the attempt had so fatal an effect, that from that night, October 28, 1782, till Wednesday December the 18th, she never was able to appear again. To complete my perplexities at that time, Mrs. Jordan set forward for Hull, November 2, but did not despatch her business to be ready to do mine until Thursday December 26.

I must note, that these particulars have rushed suddenly on my memory, and I find they are out of time, though not of place, for the circumstances here alluded to are strict, as to the facts, relative to Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Smith, but did not happen in the year 1784, but so far back as Mrs. Jordan's first winter season 1782, therefore are misplaced.

I here set the reader and myself down by surprise, as I do not recollect that I have given the lady or gentleman, as passengers, any exact notice of the journey to Hull 1784; yet that season afforded an incident that was rather remarkable. Miss WILKINSON a relation to the Miss Wilkinson of Sadler's Wells, was that autumn on a visit to a Mr. Wilkinson her brother, who is well known at the Circus, and bears a very honest and industrious character: Now this said Miss Wilkinson had for some years been the sport of fortune, had various engagements, and out of the little pittance she hardly obtained, she supported her father and mother, consequently on her visit with her parents to her brother at Hull, I need not insinuate, either with good nature or sarcastic inuendo, that she was not in an envied or an affluent state as to her finances.

To engage the reader's attention the more, I must give information that at present the lady is called, and with truth, Mrs. MOUNTAIN; she is now of Covent-Garden Theatre, wife to Mr. Mountain, a gentleman of undoubted merit in the musical line, and to add to her fame was then and is now, by many, believed to be my daughter, merely from the accident of her first appearance at Covent-Garden Theatre being announced, *Miss Wilkinson, from the Theatre-Royal, York;* not that I need blush, but be proud of my pro-

geny, as she is a lady of great merit and genius. This said called daughter of mine being at Hull in the season mentioned, 1784, was disengaged, and in consequence had waited with her parents for my arrival, for an engagement, which solicitation I received on the instant; but with the number of people I really had engaged, rejected a young girl whom I judged a novice.

A Mr. Buck, who had quitted the stage, and for the honour of the York company, was then independent, and is now living in London, was to have a benefit on Friday, November 19, 1784, and many persons being solicitous to hear the girl, of whom her father and brother spoke in raptures, the said Mr. Buck made an agreement with her to perform "The Maid of the Mill" for that night, and after that to repeat George Alexander Stevens's Lecture on Heads, and in point of speaking, deportment, singing, humour not void of discrimination, I do honestly confess and profess, that I have seldom witnessed such a performance at so early an age; for I do not believe she was more than fifteen, and in every part of the difficult task she had to sustain, I do not think but a London audience would have joined in my humble opinion, that her merit was undoubted, and not only gave promise for a little but a great deal; which makes me think that not only from what she performed that night, as a

novice, I was convinced she could have done a great deal more had she only been put to the trial. My company being loaded, and my lady fingers tenacious, and Mrs. Jordan so undoubtedly clever, and as universal as clever, my namesake, Miss Wilkinson, was not engaged; but she had given such general satisfaction, that Mr. Inchbald (son-in-law to Mrs. Inchbald) who was to have his benefit on the 3d of December, judged it well worth his while to make an offering deserving her acceptance, and on his night she acted Rosetta in "Love in a Village," an arduous task, particularly with her little figure; for though well made, even for the small clothes; yet on the whole, her person is too petite, it must be confessed, for characters where consequence and elegance of manners are required: However she did not lose ground, but acquired, all considered, additional fame. A proof the public had formed ground for good opinion, she was annexed in the bills,

ROSETTA, Miss WILKINSON,

The young lady who was received with universal applause in the character of THE MAID OF THE MILL.

After such incontestible samples of merit, it would have been as inhuman as impolitic, to have let my namesake remain in distress, with parents to support, and who might soon repay me; which

turned out to be really the case a few months after: But it occasioned uneasiness to Mrs. Powell, (now of Norwich) and what was worse, Mr. Powell her husband, who was of infinite true service to the public and myself; but these things were so, are so, and will be so to the end of the chapter; and why should it be strange that self-interest and self-vanity should be preferred to that of others:—Absurd to think of, unless we could conform to the strange opinion of the only speech I have read in the new play of “Cross Partners,” which hints, that the greatest gratification we can feel is from the reflection of beholding the happiness of others. That we may feel a strong degree of consolation from seeing those in life we wish well and esteem, to see them so placed as to secure a prospect of lasting happiness, I can and do in many instances conceive as a high consolation to my mind; but to prefer their happiness, and make their scenes of bliss, a superior self-gratification for my wants and misfortunes, is a flight too high for my comprehension. However, Miss Wilkinson was engaged, and as one of the fraternity *without the kiss*. She acted Stella, in “Robin Hood,” for my benefit, on Tuesday, December 21. I judged it necessary, as she had secured public esteem, and as she was really in want from various causes, to give her a benefit, which was on the 31st of December, “Lionel

and Clarissa." I acted Oldboy; Miss Wilkinson studied Clarissa; and Mrs. Jordan, (who from feeling for herself, knew well how to feel for the woes of others) kindly stepped forth to give her helping hand, and acted Lionel; and from her well-known sensible manner, and voice formed for articulation, no reader will doubt who knows her, but that Lionel that night, in point of sensible expression, was acted in a manner not expressed by every performer of that delicate part. Miss Wilkinson had a fine crowded house, and she added the Lecture on Heads, and obtained repeated and additional sanction and applause to her performances.

An awkward circumstance happened on the 14th of December that season: Mr. and Mrs. Brown were to have their benefit,—play, "The Busy Body"—Marplot, Mrs. Brown; with a pantomime, called "Neck or Nothing; or, A Flight to the Gods:" And Mr. Brown actually flew (by the help of a wheel above) from the stage to the gallery and back again as the Harlequin; and with the aid of his flyings, his sinkings, his ascendings and descendings, he amazed the faculties of eyes, though *not* of ears.

It cannot be doubted but such an extraordinary bill-of-fare, would excite the appetite of all who were hungry for such airy food. The house was crowded—I dined that day at a gentleman's house

in Low-gate, Hull, and being a little inebriated, did not get to the theatre till late in the evening, but found on my entrance I had been called for. A dispute it seems had arose in the stage-box, as to the number of persons who were to sit in the front-row of that box. Appeals were made to the audience by the different parties who wished to possess it; Mr. and Mrs. Brown made their appearance to appease, but were not suffered to be heard;—I was summoned and not to be found; the theatre was threatened with mischievous consequences, for which I cannot conceive any one reason, nor I believe my reader; for the front row was only let to its usual compliment of six, which said number it had contained without a single *remonstrance* to the contrary, from the year 1766, to the said year, 1784; nor could the cause of complaint originate with me, but the box-keeper, had the places been wrong: But surely to the catalogue of faults a poor manager is liable to, none would be so hard as to call on him about disputes with different parties as to places; for if the box-keeper acts wrong, he can only, with any propriety, be complained of the next day; but if I am either dining out or at home, sick or well, engaged or not engaged, if I were liable to be called on the stage, and to answer for a point of business, that of the letting of places, of which I am as ignorant as the first Lord of the Ad-

miralty, and I hope to continue in my ignorance; as a more disagreeable business I cannot conceive, (as daily experience proves) for there is as much jealousy as to the precedency of places with the audience part, as there is behind the scenes for the lead of principal characters. A lady of Hull, who is now no more, called aloud that evening, for Wilkinson to be brought on his knees, because there was a riot in the theatre, owing to a party having taken only five front seats in the stage-box, and refusing a sixth person from having the sixth seat, which completely filled the row, and a sea officer, (husband to the lady who had the sixth place) disputed the point, and from that arose the disturbance. I need not hint that the Hull lady of ton, who called so vociferously for me, was not of a pedigree as long as Cadwallader's, nor her breeding or good nature borrowed from any polite tables. I have been informed the lady had once appertained to the theatre of Drury-Lane, as a *decorater* of the stage-apparatus to a tragedy queen: But if that was really so, it should have taught her more breeding and knowledge. Certainly the lot of a manager is liable to unavoidable, as well as undeserved blame. But this I dare aver, I do not know any vanity or self-satisfaction this life can give, equal to the public voice being unanimous and agreeing they are *well used*, and the manager

deserves every encouragement. I have that true happiness *at times*, and it invigorates, it is that glorious triumph of flattery that cannot be described, and indeed comes so very seldom, it would be affectation to resist, and not court it—Certainly, I wish to deserve, and am eager to catch at it: When I fail in merit, from ignorance, let my will and wishes make amends for the deficiency. As to the Hull riot, I should mention that it died a natural death, but not without great disturbance at the end of the first, second, third, and fourth acts. However it was got over without any damage being sustained, and the officer at last was appeased, and the remainder of the evening went on smoothly, and the next day I struck out number 6 from the front row, and inserted number 5, and have not heard of any complaint of that kind since.

I will here drop the curtain at Hull for the season 1784-5, and draw it up at York, with that theatre newly embellished, in the month of January 1785. It will be noticed, that all the performers mentioned at Hull had made their appearance before at York, so the only novelty was Miss Wilkinson, who played Patty in "The Maid of the Mill," on Thursday, January 20, 1785.

These dates though tedious to repeat and indifferent to the reader, are of some little moment.

and satisfaction to the curiosity of the performers themselves; to those whom it makes appear older on the stage, they would skip the leaf; to those whom it makes appear younger, the leaf is kept open.

Early in February 1785, Signior Scaglioni, with his dancing dogs from Sadlers Wells, performed seven or eight nights at York theatre, and were really followed, and brought full houses. Whether the judgment was right or no, is not for me to decide; I can with truth say they entertained me, and I laughed immoderately at almost the whole of their performances: Indeed I received double entertainment to any other spectator, for I not only was pleased with the dogs in the theatre, but had my bow for the money they occasioned into my pocket before supper, by way of a whet to my appetite; which occasioned another grin, *not* that of the most horrible, but placid, agreeable, and full of smiles.

"Fontainbleau, or our Way in France," was got up that season, and I gave its first representation (after being at the expence of Music, Scenery, &c.) for Mrs. Smith's benefit, on Saturday, Feb. 26, 1785: I cast Lady Bull to Mrs. Smith; Miss Bull to Mrs. Jordan. Mrs. Smith, though proper for the character, yet disliked so much the playing it, that notwithstanding her having the compliment of it the first representa-

tion for her own benefit, yet we quarrelled because I refused a particular requisite when she represented that character; and she was so foolish as to put in practice what she said she would, that was, spoil the character every time she played it; and no compliment to her wisdom or her folly; for she really kept her word most rigidly, and when she was losing her own reputation, gloried in thinking she vexed the manager: We quarrelled so much at Leeds on the subject, that we agreed to part at the expiration of articles, the end of May 1786, and never were friends again in Yorkshire. Miss Wilkinson that season improved nightly.—Mrs. Jordan had an offer, which she accepted, for Drury-lane the autumn following, I believe Mr. Smith of that theatre was the principal agent.

Mrs. Jordan was not by any means gaining ground that season; she grew very careless and inattentive; was very often really or fictitiously ill. On Mr. Mills's benefit, March 15, 1785, she was to sing at the end of the third act of Cymbeline and to act the Poor Soldier; she declared she was indisposed, and would not sing the song, and no persuasion would do. Those who know Mrs. Jordan must know, without the least offence, she is very obstinate; she may be led but will not be driven on the stage nor off, *unless when she is in the humour*: however the audience would not

suffer the play to proceed. Had she not been in the farce, and staid at home under the pretext of real illness or very probably was really ill, all might have been well, but it certainly appeared strange that she could act and sing the Poor Soldier, and yet not be able to chaunt a little ballad. Mr. Mills attempted to address the audience, but all in vain, and on *the* Jordan came, and dressed as the Poor Soldier; she was very pale, pleaded illness; fainted against the frontispiece; but all would not do, for Poor Patrick was obliged to sing,

“ In the prattling hours of youth,”

from the “Summer Amusement;” which was as truly ridiculous for Pat the Soldier to sing, as when I was in Dublin the audience making me speak Woodward’s “Poor Prodigal,” when in large boots, stuffed belly, and rosy cheeks I was dressed for Major Sturgeon.

The drama’s laws the drama’s patrons give,
We who live to please, must please to live.

Not that the audience I believe would have conquered, had she possessed that charming ingredient with which she now rolls in plenty, but her benefit was not over, her pocket did not clink with gold or silver, perchance not even with copper; she could not afford to retaliate, or aim at victory.

Mrs. Jordan has more sense than to suppose, in relating these follies and transactions, I mean any more than to make her laugh, as well as any other reader; her not being so affluent at the time I am making mention, reflects not the least disgrace, as she never can shine more in her days of prosperity than in her days of affliction.

Mrs. Brown, that season, at York; acted on Saturday, April 2, the Country Girl, which play being rather obsolete, had escaped Mrs. Jordan's attention, as to her inspection as a reader, and it had not been a play acted during her time in Dublin; she was surprised at the effect Mrs. Brown made on the audience by her performance in that character; and it struck Mrs. Jordan's ideas so forcibly, that she declared she would study and act that part the following winter at Drury Lane: and I do believe that seeing Mrs. Brown play Peggy and several of the principal girls' characters, was what luckily, I may say for her, drew her attention to such parts, which have turned out so greatly to her credit, fame, and rapid fortune: For the reader may observe, that in the course of Mrs. Jordan's few seasons at York, (the Romp excepted) she hardly ever appeared in such characters. She played universally, it is true, but they were such parts as Zara, in Zara, Jane Shore, Indiana, Rutland, sentimental and gay ladies, chambermaids, opera parts,

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several breeches characters, as William, the Poor Soldier, &c.; so though I granted her great utility, great merit, and great and infinite genius, yet I had not a thought of its being possible for her to have succeeded to such a degree in the girls' characters. This is not a proof of my discernment; and it is as strange that Mrs. Jordan's great success in the Romp, in Yorkshire, did not make her anxious to try in that cast of profitable playing; and still more strange, that we did not mutually agree on the experiment, as she had acted with me four winters from 1782, in the summer, till September 1785; and till the season 1785, when Mrs. Brown played most of those parts, they had been very indifferently supplied: Her plaintive tragedy then had great merit, and her Poor Soldier, William, Romp, &c. just as well then as now, and the figure to the full as proper. It has been often mentioned and credited that Mrs. Brown taught Mrs. Jordan, but that had no foundation, the simple fact is here told; besides I do not think Mrs. Brown had a wish to give any instructions, nor the other lady the least inclination to have received them, had they been offered; each held the abilities of the other in the highest contempt, and there was no love lost between them.

I cannot close my digressive, expressive, inexpressive history of the York season without noti-

sing, that on Tuesday, April 26, 1785, Mrs. YATES, on her return from Edinburgh, obliged me with her inimitable performance of her favourite character of Margaret of Anjou, in the Rev. Mr. Franklin's "Earl of Warwick," when I assure my reader, she played as well that night as any time I had ever seen her. There cannot be left a doubt remaining but that the audience were all gratified in the highest degree: The epilogue was equal to her assumed majesty; and she was as well pleased with her reception, as the audience were with her excellent acting.

I shall not expatiate on my dear friend Mrs. Yates's merit, as an actress,—the world of play-house attendants have all paid tribute of applause, and tears for her irreparable loss. I have so often mentioned my insignificant opinion of Mrs. Yates in my Memoirs, that to be tedious on her allowed and established character, would be superfluous and impertinent; however, I cannot quit Mrs. Yates, without remarking, that her last performance on any stage, (Mrs. Bellamy's benefit in London excepted) was at York that evening, as just now related; her very last was in the June following, for the *unfortunate, unthinking* Bellamy.

The farce added to "The Earl of Warwick," was "Cymon;" Sylvia, Miss Wilkinson; Fatima, Mrs. Jordan; and Dorcas, Mrs. Brown.—

Mr. Yates witnessed the performance, and pronounced Mrs. Jordan as *merely a piece of theatrical mediocrity*; Miss Wilkinson as *very pleasing and promising*; and Mrs. Brown's Dorcas as *the height of excellence*.

After having recounted Mrs. Yates's performance at York, and the other exploits, I will hasten to the middle of May, 1785, pack up bag and baggage, bid my farewell to York Theatre and the audience, and set my reader down at Leeds for the summer season, 1785.

The first week of opening was the week after Whitsuntide, when Mrs. Siddons, THE GREAT, was to act at Manchester for 6 nights. I posted there from York on the Sunday, with two gentlemen of York, Mrs. Wilkinson, my son, a young gentleman, and a lady who has sustained the leading character in York city, and on Monday, May 23, with great difficulty obtained seats (for Mr. Mattocks would not interfere in that matter) for our little party, and we saw Mrs. Siddons perform Isabella that evening, and Jane Shore the following. We went down to view the Duke of Bridgewater's cut, and on the Wednesday evening we all arrived *safe at Leeds*. Indeed I cannot say ALL, for one of the gentlemen got such a cold from the heat attending the difficulty of taking places; that he had a severe fit of illness, and from that time to this

has frequent relapses, all owing to our party of pleasure.

At that time I engaged Mrs. Robinson, (now Mrs. Taylor) who had been all the prior season the Siddons of Manchester, but then a little in the dumps at Mrs. Siddons, in May 1785, acting her first esteemed characters; and I believe did not judge much superiority due, more than allowing for the folly of whim, novelty, and fashion.

Mrs. Robinson was to act 4 nights at Leeds, and on the Wednesday I arrived from Manchester, she made her first appearance in that heavy plaintive part of Elwina in "Percy," which she played with credit, but not equal to her forms of fancy. After the play she acted the Irish Widow, which not only in my judgment, but every body's, was much superior to her tragedy.

Her figure in the small clothes was neat to a degree of perfection, and her deportment, spirit, and conception of that part was I think the best I had then, or have since seen. Her second night was Isabella in "The Fatal Marriage." Mrs. Jordan's mother, Mrs. Bland, who was sitting at the stage door, while Mrs. Robinson was acting, frequently took hold of me by the hand or coat, clapping her apron before her eyes, and begging, as an act of kindness, I would inform her when that fright had done acting and speaking; for it was so horrid she could not look at her.

On the other hand, one evening when I was chatting with Mrs. Robinson, she wondered I could allow the merit I did to that Mrs. Jordan; for her own part, she could not discover any, or if any, it was not beyond a small share of mediocrity. She thought she possessed some judgment, and would venture to pronounce when I lost my *great treasure*, (as I termed Mrs. Jordan) in the autumn, and it went to London, it would soon be turned back again upon my hands, and it would be glad to come if I would accept it. But that prophecy was not verified, of which I wish Mrs. Jordan joy, though my compliments may not be worth her acceptance in her present station.

Mrs. Robinson finished her nights of performance with Rosalind, Wednesday, June 1, 1785, was much liked every night she played, became a great favourite, and the applause, when she made her last courtesy, on that occasion, was accompanied with regret, as they greatly wished her continuance.

Mr. Moody recommended Mr. DIGNUM that summer, who was well received; was then engaged at Drury-Lane for the winter, and had only played one season there: His first appearance at Leeds was in Young Meadows, on Friday, June 10th. I was studious to oblige him, gave him frequent invitations, particularly at

York races, but strange to tell, I have not seen him off the stage from that time to this. Yes, I have last summer, 1793, at Liverpool, which meeting afforded me much satisfaction.

I must inform the Yorkshire auditor, he would have been much displeased had I presented the opera of "Inkle and Yarico" to public view, and I would have incurred much deserved censure, if that piece had been performed without the scene of the Quay, or even the sign of the Crown; and Yarico was acted, and well, by Mrs. Powell, but *without songs*; which was actually the case on Wednesday, July 3, 1793, at Liverpool. That theatre is noble, but it cannot boast of ornament or novelty as to scenery. The scenery there is chiefly the remainder of that with which it was opened so long ago as June 1772.

Mrs. Jordan grew so careless, that her fame was on the decrease that summer: Her benefit was on Monday, July 25, when she acted Imogen in the play, and Rachel in "The Fair American" in the farce: The house was thinly attended indeed. I mention this circumstance, as the year following, when London held up her train, the reader will find a wonderful alteration at Leeds.

Miss WALLIS, that summer, then not in her teens, acted the Fine Lady in "Lethe," and as a child was very clever; but as I shall have oc-

casion by and bye to mention her when nearer maturity, I will leave her for the present, and introduce Mrs. FARREN, once known at Drury-Lane Theatre, and who was very handsome; but when I beheld her at Leeds (from what cause or causes I know not) the figure was grown unwieldy, and the acting very coarse and heavy; her behaviour was very rude and commanding, attended with great insolence, so that engagement soon broke to my satisfaction. I cannot answer for the lady's inclinations as to our separation, as I never have heard of her from that summer, 1785, to the present hour: I do suppose she is gone to "Our kingdom come," or sleeps with her ancestors, without thinking of the Countess of Salisbury, Euphrasia, or her genealogy.

On August 19, we bid adieu, and travelled back to York for the races, where Miss VALOIS was engaged: She was a very deserving woman; for sometime the Colombine at Covent-Garden, and was a very good dancer: I was sorry she was not done justice to at York, as she had really merit and œconomy, and good principles added to her good conduct; but I do not know how it was, the ladies did not like her eyes, nor the gentlemen neither, and after that it was impossible for her to be pleasantly received. Miss Valois only continued with me the winter season following that race-week, 1785.

I had not any London comet with a *fiery tail* that meeting, yet did remarkably well. The last play of that week was "The Inconstant," by desire of Lady Gallway. Mr. Wilkinon (brother to the young lady of that name) performed on the wire, also he and his wife on the musical glasses; they likewise exhibited three or four nights at Leeds. The farce to "The Inconstant" was "The Poor Soldier." Mrs. Siddons was that night at the play: Mrs. Jordan acted the Poor Soldier, and Mrs. Siddons seemed to think Mrs. Jordan was better where she was, than to venture on the London boards.

Mrs. Jordan's last appearance, as a lady of my company at York, was on Friday, Sep. 2, the week after the races, 1785, and her last night with me, that year, as a Yorkshire comedian, was at Wakefield, on Friday, Sep. 9, 1785, in the Poor Soldier, from whence she set off with a doubtful heart for London city, dubious of success; but in a few weeks she made her debut, and in a few nights after being seen, was so established in fame and favour, and so increasing on the public mind, that it is needless for me to tell the reader, what he or she and every body knows, how she fascinated, nay *intoxicated*, I may say, the London audience, and played at *Will-o-the-Wisp*;—for as she moved they followed.

Mrs. Robinson articulated with me, on Mrs. Jordan's departure, for the winter season; and at

Wakefield, in the race week, acted Portia and the Irish Widow.

It is a rule seldom objected to I believe any where, the choosing any part for a first appearance in a town; indeed it is made such an absurd use of, that many persons indulge their vanity "for that night only," which often convinces the audience and the manager they never need appear again in it. Not that I hint that to be the case respecting Mrs. Robinson, now Mrs. Taylor, for she was an established actress, and had been used to the boards from her childhood. Her making choice of Portia, Mrs. Smith took in great dudgeon; she was tenacious to a folly: In consequence, to prevent the play being acted as I had appointed, Mr. and Mrs. Smith made secret application to Lady M*****, to desire Mrs. Smith might act the part; which her ladyship really did require, and with her own opinion in favour of Mrs. Smith: For though she had not seen Mrs. Robinson on the stage, yet her ladyship conceived a dislike to the seeing her act Portia, as Mrs. Smith had conveyed a notion it interfered with her interest, and would in consequence be an injury to her fame: But as the bills were printed off the day of the request, it was impossible for me, as manager, with justice or any degree of propriety, to disgrace Mrs. Robinson by such an improper and unprecedented

behaviour on my part. Her ladyship was in *some degree* convinced, came to the play, looked very cool on Mrs. Robinson, but in the farce began to alter her opinion more in favour of the stranger.

Mrs. Robinson* has a person well made, and is as neat as if she had a dozen virgins at her toilet to decorate her person: The appellation of Congreve's,—“*As flatteringly as an actress*,”—can never be made applicable to that lady—Her powers are good—voice not musical, and at times runs sharp to a degree—her judgment is good, but sometimes hid and clouded like the crust of a penny tart, which is spoiled by the cake of sugar; by which elegant simile I mean, Mrs. Robinson is naturally and habitually apt to let affectation peep where the characters should only take place, by which predominant feature, any indifferent spectator would easily and quickly decry—“Oh! O! I have found you out—I perceive it is not Jane Shore I am hearing and seeing, but PRETTY Mrs. ROBINSON *the actress*.” Now as that performer possesses a strong understanding, she should take care of this, for she does not confine it to the stage, consequently she is too often acting off the stage, *without knowing it*.

We all are too apt to like a certain part of our own manners more agreeable to self than to others, which is not observable to ourselves, because we have adopted, without knowing, pecu-

* Now Mrs. Taylor.

liarities which are agreeable to *dear dear SELF*; and because we do not perceive the blemish, wonder any person should find out, what we either do not, or will not, be unwillingly convinced of. I have twenty gesticulations, all the effect of bad habit, which do not diminish but encrease by the week.

I dare say no person has been so rude as to mention this to the lady in question, but if she will ask any observant friend, on whose judgment she can depend, I would wager that the gentleman would answer, "Why, my dear madam, you are a good actress, and a valuable woman, but I must in part, if I am to speak truth, allow that Mr. Wilkinfon is not entirely wrong in his opinion."—But it is owing to that foible which makes her restless and unsettled in many of her engagements, and that too often occasions much disagreement, altercation, notes upon notes, message after message, and in the conclusion is so teizing and perpetually perplexing, that it prevents not only lasting good engagements, but does not stimulate to the increase of new offers. Her own inclination, as a performer, leads almost entirely to tragedy; she was the Siddons of Manchester; but tragedy is yearly decreasing in public favour; and though to see a good actor or actress, a tragedy now and then may certainly be allowed, if well performed, an

elegant and improving entertainment, yet comedy must take the lead, and that jade Thalia has evidently conquered by her wiles and smiles the artful Melpomene, in spite of her guards, daggers, and the poisoned bowl: Therefore Mrs. Robinson has been wrong in paying such sole attention to the tragic walk; not only because the Irish Widow is one if not the best of her performances, but being partial to blank verse only, takes away her utility; and for a more material reason, her features, though truly delicate and pleasing, as before observed, yet they certainly are not prominent or sufficiently marking for Zara, the Grecian Daughter, &c. and are much better calculated for the line of genteel comedy. I am not singular in that opinion, for a gentleman of much allowed judgment in theatrical matters, Colonel Balfour, when at Doncaster, asked me the reason why Mrs. Robinson was perpetually acting tragedy, and all the comedies without her, where she evidently would shew to more advantage, as her features he said were not impressive for the one, but were light and calculated for the other. However Mrs. Robinson was deservedly much admired; and I do *not* want, or mean by what I have said, to lessen her merit, but allow her a considerable share, and only wish her to do, what she may *easily* do, increase her theatrical reputation by giving more variety. If she is

angry with me for these sentiments, I shall be extremely sorry, for I wish her well, and shall be glad to see her once more as an actress and an acquaintance.

I must take my leave of that lady for the present, and must not forget to mention that my little treasure, Miss Wilkinson, (for so she truly proved in a double capacity after Mrs. Jordan's departure) was bold enough to attempt the hazardous undertaking of the Poor Soldier at Wakefield and Doncaster races, 1785: It is true she did not sport a leg *like the Jordan*, neither was her person so tall, but she was then a delightful pretty girl, and made a smart little foldier: She was received with raptures, and gave that farce a new run for the ensuing winter seasons at Hull and York.—The first night she made her effort in that character at Doncaster, I supped with my true friend, General St. Leger and a party of gentlemen, at Stanuel's Hotel, when every one of the party after supper requested I would receive a guinea from each, which commission I accepted, on the conditions of my own guinea being added to the favour. This was presented as a compliment for the great pleasure she had afforded so immediately after the loss of Mrs. Jordan.

Miss SWALWELL (now Mrs. Southgate) made her first appearance at Doncaster, on the night of her father's benefit, Monday, October 17, 1785:

Her person very good, an uncommon well made figure in the breeches characters, very attentive, a pleasing actress, understands a little music, has a sweet warbling pipe, though not powerful, and added to that, is a dutiful child, of excellent character, and may be without compliment, truly called, (what she was and is) an amiable and good young woman; that night she only sung two songs, "The Prattling Hours of Youth," and "Thou Soft Flowing Avon." Since that time she has been my Colombine, and credit to most of my genteel comedies, very useful in my operas, deservedly well received in the Poor Soldier, William, &c. and in the musical pieces in general.

I took a trip to see a play at Sheffield, where a Mr. Pero had taken possession of the theatric throne, in October 1785; I saw a Mr. Southgate act the parts of Acres and Billy Bristle, and was highly pleased, so much so that I promised myself much acquisition, and judged Mr. Southgate would be one of the first comedians on any stage. I made overtures to him in the course of the winter, and an engagement took place in April, 1786; and when I arrive at that period will introduce him to the reader.

And now with Mrs. Robinson (my tragedy queen) in my hand, I bid farewell, to elegant Doncaster, and presto pass and begone for Hull, where

we opened the theatre, on Tuesday, October 25, 1785, with "The Natural Son," and on Tuesday, Nov. 1, Mrs. Robinson made her first appearance in Rosalind, and was much liked; after that she played a run of first rate characters, and was in public esteem to a particular degree of favour and notice, in private as well as on the stage, by several of the most leading and respectable characters in the hospitable town of Hull.

At this time a particular plan of alteration in theatrical politics and arrangements in the Hull Theatre took place, which gave a damp to the business during the nights where I was concerned till the benefit nights began. To a stranger the narrative will, I fear, be far from interesting or entertaining, but to a York and Hull reader, rather necessary, and will I trust not be offensive or unacceptable. It had been a custom for years to open the theatres at York and Hull for the manager's nights on a low subscription, in order, I do suppose, originally to secure an audience, and make plays generally known and fashionable; and nothing so likely to procure customers than holding out a remarkable cheap commodity; for we all like bargains in every state and stage of life. Before I proceed to my particular part of the history, or even my old predecessor's, I will, as a strong specimen, treat the reader, (if I may be permitted the term) with the following very

old and curious play-bills and theatrical relics, by which the reader will judge how stage performances were rated in the country, so late as 60 or 70 years back.

“ ’Twas strange, ’twas passing strange;

“ ’Twas PITIFUL, ’twas wond’rous PITIFUL.”

I wish I had not read them, but here they follow from the originals as then printed.—I intrude the first as a curiosity, though it interferes with the precedence of business.

K3

For the Benefit of Mr. ORFEUR,

Who is debarr'd the Liberty of paying his Respects, and making his Interest on the Account of an Action in the Power of Mr. Hudly from one at London,

By Mr. KEREKAN's Company of Comedians, at

Mr. Banks's Cock-Pit, without Boutham-Bar.

To Morrow, being *Tuesday* the 15th Instant, will be Acted a TRAGEDY, call'd,

The Mourning BRIDE:

MEN.

The King,
Gonsalez,
Garcia,
Perex,
Alonzo,
Osmyn,
Hely,
Selim,

{ Mr. Orfeur.
{ Mr. Woodward.
{ Mr. Theo. Lacy.
by { Mr. Goodshau.
{ Mr. Gibbs.
{ Mr. Keregan.
{ Mr. Miller.
{ Mr. Fuller.

WOMEN.

Almeria,
Zara,
Leonora,
by { Mrs. Glassington.
{ Mrs. Keregan.
{ Mrs. Goodshau.

With Entertainments of Dancing: And several Dialogues of Mr. Purcell, by Mr. Woodward, Mrs. Orfeur, and Mr. Fuller. Together with a Congratulatory POEM on the Accession of His Present Majesty King GEORGE to the Throne of Great-Britain. Wrote and Spoke by Mr. ORFEUR.
Beginning at Six of the Clock,

New **THEATRE**

In my Lord IRWIN's Yard, York.

On **TUESDAY**, the 1st of October, 1734, will be acted,
a **PLAY** called,**HENRY the IVth :**

WITH THE

Humours of Sir John Falstaff.

To which Mr. KEREKAN hopes the GENTLEMEN and LADIES of this City, will favour him with their company, it being the only night he desires, before subscription time, notwithstanding his great charge for THEIR RECEPTION.

BOXES, Three Shillings.

PIT, Two Shillings.

STAGE, Three Shillings.

MIDDLE GALLERY, One Shilling.

N. B. The **PLAY** will be all new dress'd with New Scenes, from **LONDON**, suitable to his House: With a *Prologue* and *Epilogue*. The **MUSICK** consists of *Overtures*, *Concertos*, *Sonatos*, and *Solos*. Three **PIECES** will be perform'd before the **PLAY** begins: The first at five o'Clock, the second at half an hour after five, and the third at six; at the end of which, the **Cur- tain** will be drawn up.

On **THURSDAY**, the 3d of October, 1734.

Will begin a **SUBSCRIPTION** for Twenty-six **PLAYS**, at Two per Week, Box and Stage-Tickets a Guinea and a Half each: A Ticket for the Pit One Guinea. Tickets may be transferr'd. Those who don't subscribe, are liable to the above-mention'd Price. As there is no difference made of the Boxes, those, who bespeak them first, sending their Names to the Box-Keepers, will have 'em kept for them.

N. B. No **SERVANT** will be admitted to any part of the House with a **SUBSCRIPTION TICKET**.

“ THE CASE OF
“ THOMAS KEREGAN,

“ PROPRIETOR OF THE THEATRE,
“ Humbly addressed to the Quality, Gentry, and
“ Citizens of YORK.

“ HAVING suffered very much of late in my
“ business, and, as I apprehend, by an ill opinion
“ conceived of me for keeping up my subscrip-
“ tion at the price they were first given
“ out the erecting of my new theatre, it
“ having suggested that they might be af-
“ forded lower price, but an unreasonable
“ desire to myself had made me reject
“ the advice of my friends in that respect; I
“ thought it my duty, as well as interest, to give
“ the inhabitants of this ancient city the best
“ satisfaction I was able in this affair, by volun-
“ tarily laying before them the state of my last
“ quarter's accounts; whereby it will appear,
“ that I was near one hundred pounds a looser by
“ the last quarter's subscription only: And as I
“ never did desire any thing more than a reason-
“ able maintenance for myself and family, I
“ humbly hope, after the great expence I have
“ been at, that I shall not be compelled to re-
“ move my Company to some other place for
“ want of encouragement here. I beg leave fur-

“ther to inform the public that notwithstanding
“ing I have lowered the pit tickets to sixteen
“shillings, the advantage I have received by it
“hath been very small, viz. only the addition of
“fourteen subscribers, notwithstanding it redu-
“ces the pit to *sevenpence halfpenny a night*, which
“is less than half the price paid to the meanest
“company of Players in the kingdom. Before
“I conclude this short representation of my case,
“I cannot but take notice, that it hath been in-
“sinuated very much to my prejudice, *That nei-*
“*ther myself, nor my wife, have been sufficiently*
“*thankful for the favours which have been done us*
“*in coming to our benefits*: Whereas I can say,
“with great truth, that no one was ever more
“sensible of (and thankful for) such favours than
“we both have always been; however we may
“have failed in any acknowledgments from the
“stage; a thing never practised in any theatre
“but this, it being contrary to the rules of the
“stage: But as we are now sensible it is expected
“from us, we shall take care for the future, to
“the best of our knowledge, to do nothing
“which may give offence to any of our friends
“and benefactors.

" Money received last Quarter.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
" 47 Box tickets, at one guinea and " a half each	74	0	6
" 34 Pit, at one guinea each			
" The half of five benefit plays	53	9	9
" Chance money taken in time of the " subscription	125	9	0

 288 13 3
Money paid last Quarter.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
" To sixteen actors and actresses at " 12s. and a pit ticket <i>per</i> week	145	12	0
" To Mrs. Evans, and Mrs. Copen's " children			
" For the use of clothes, scenes, pro- " perties, &c. four shares or sala- " ries, allowed by the meanest " companies abroad	72	16	0
" Getting up two entertainments, " with new scenes and clothes, &c.			
" To charges of new people coming " from London			
" 31 nights charge, at 4 <i>l.</i> <i>per</i> night, " viz. 5 benefits, and 26 subscrip- " tion nights			

 30 0 0

 10 10 0

 124 0 0

 " Sum total of expences 384 8 0

 " Of receipts 288 13 3

 " Lost last quarter 95 14 9

"The persons who take my money, and deliver out all the subscription-tickets, have set their hands to this account; and, if occasion be, are ready to make oath of the same.

"WILLIAM GREEN,

"JOHN EMMETT.

"For a more particular satisfaction, the following account of the nightly charges of acting, exclusive of salaries, &c.

"Music	-	-	-	-	-	0	10	6
"Office keeper	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	6
"Wardrobe keeper	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	6
"Clerk and numberer	-	-	-	-	-	0	3	0
"Door keepers	-	-	-	-	-	0	6	6
"Stage keeper	-	-	-	-	-	0	3	6
"Coals	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	0
"Tallow, oil, cotton, and candles	-	-	-	-	-	0	12	6
"Bills one day with another	-	-	-	-	-	0	6	0
"Incidents one night with another	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0
"Rent of the house as now built up	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0
"Mr. Chock	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	6
"Drink to the Door keepers	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	6
						2	14	0

"Besides play books, writing of plays out, and odd parts; for writing out music for entertainments; drink for the music at practice; letters from several players; carpenters and

“ smiths; jobs, often for particular plays; glaf-
“ fes, frequently broke; washing the stock linen;
“ cards, wax, and the printing subscription tickets;
“ and many other little articles that are impossi-
“ ble to remember, which exceed four pounds
“ *per* night.

“ Tickets delivered for the present quarter are,
“ 32 box tickets at 1l. 11s. 6d. each, is fifteen-
“ pence a night. 31 pit tickets, at 16s. each, is
“ sevenpence halfpenny a night; both which in
“ the whole, pay me no more than two pounds
“ sixteen shillings and fivepence a night, for
“ acting, or five pounds twelve shillings and ten-
“ pence *per* week: So that I am obliged to stand
“ the favour of the town for 16l. 7s. *per* week.

“ N. B. All those, who are willing to encou-
“ rage the present box subscription, shall be al-
“ lowed in proportion for the PLAYS that are
“ past.”

"To the GENTLEMEN and LADIES of the
"City of YORK.

"GENTLEMEN and LADIES,

"The present indifferent situation of the
"PLAY-HOUSE at YORK, and your great dis-
"position to promote Theatrical Diversions, en-
"courag'd me, since the death of Mr. *Keregan*
"and his son, to undertake the regulation and
"improvement of that STAGE: Upon which I
"apply'd in person to Mrs. *Keregan*, thinking I
"might, upon reasonable terms, enter upon the
"management, both with your and her approba-
"tion, but to my surprise, instead of meeting
"with the civility I imagin'd my proposals de-
"serv'd, she treated me in a manner I as little
"merited as expected. However, finding this
"usage from Mrs. *Keregan*, I made my design
"known to some gentlemen of this city, who
"were pleas'd to promise me all the encourage-
"ment they seem'd to think such an undertak-
"ing deserv'd, and perswaded me to publish my
"PROPOSALS for a SUBSCRIPTION, not doubt-
"ing, as I had the good fortune formerly to meet
"with tolerable success in my theatrical capa-
"city, I should not now fail of it in my present
"undertaking.

" PROPOSALS.

" I purpose to have a new and commodious
" Theatre (to be situated in some convenient
" part of the city) the model of those in Lon-
" don.

" There shall be several complete sets of new
" Scenes, painted by the best masters in London,
" with all such properties and machines as are
" required as well for ornament as use.

" The *Orchestra* shall consist of a proper num-
" ber of hands, to make a complete Band of
" Music, that may correspond with the rest.

" A Wardrobe of such clothes as shall no ways
" be inferior in shape or trim to those on any
" stage, the quantity excepted.

" The Company shall be made up of several
" persons from London, the rest to be collected
" from travelling companies; in which particu-
" lar care shall be had to their private life, that
" they may be as social off the stage as entertain-
" ing on it. And that I may be enabled to pro-
" cure such people, I will make an addition to the
" salary before given, and by that means make
" up a better company than has been in any city
" but London.

" Every season there shall be got up such
" Plays, Operas, Farces, and Pantomimical En-
" tertainments as are done with any reputation
" in London, and with the utmost expedition.

“ There shall be a Quarterly Subscription for
“ the Boxes and Pit, as before has been practised,
“ and at the usual rates, that is to say, One
“ Guinea and an Half the Boxes, and the Pit
“ One Guinea.

“ Mr. *Keregan*, for several quarters last past,
“ made an abatement in the Subscription, which
“ I believe was occasioned through the barren-
“ ness of his diversions, rather than a desire in
“ the Subscribers to reduce the price, I therefore
“ hope it will not be considered as an imposition,
“ if I restore the Subscription to what it was,
“ since my expence both as to house and per-
“ formers will be more considerable, and conse-
“ quently more agreeable.

“ The Gentlemen and Ladies who are willing
“ to encourage this undertaking, I hope will ex-
“ cuse my personal application, my business
“ obliging me to attend the theatre in London
“ till the latter end of May; and am,

“ Their most obedient humble servant,

LONDON, *April 5,*
1741.

“ JOHN ARTHUR.” *

* The said John Arthur was well known in London, at Covent-Garden Theatre, as a comedian, and was in great favour as the Clown in Harlequin Sorcerer and other Pantomimes, in which he has seldom been equalled, and never excelled. He died at Bath, where he had been several years directing manager.

These old relicts of play-bills* may appear tedious, frivolous, and unnecessary to a southern or nice peruser, but to a Yorkshire or theatrical reader they certainly are remains of antiquity, that incontestibly prove the state of the York Theatre many years since, and give information to me which I should not otherwise have been led to have imagined, which is the circumstance of the Boxes formerly being three shillings though not continued at that price: For previous to my having any knowledge of the laws and customs, which are widely different from any other theatrical state or little community, the subscription tickets to the Boxes for 35 plays transferrable at York, was 1s. 3d. to the Boxes, and 7^d. only for the Pit, then raised when the New Theatre was built, in 1764-5 (and still remains the player's rendezvous); the Box subscription tickets were 1s. 3d. per night, and the Pit 1s.; the which custom prevailed, and was continued during the life of my predecessor, Mr. Baker: On his death, the expences of the theatre (I may say) was so

* I can assert myself an instance of being an amateur of old play-bills; indeed so much so, that if any lady or gentleman is in possession of the bills for Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, from Sept. 1746 to 1752, and if the possessor of such (to me an invaluable treasure) would treat me with the loan, or as a present, do not know any gift would make such a doating fool more perfectly happy.

extravagantly increased by my unthinking head and lavish hand, that no objection could be made to the advance on Box admission to 3s. and to subscribers for a certain number of allotted nights the season was 1s. 6d. which continued till the year I am here treating of at Hull, Oct. 1785. How the rich performers of London, who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and who feed sumptuously every day, will smile at our humble fare, and the demands of price urged by many as imposing and not worthy the payment! though the subscribers required in 1785, were not equal to that demanded and paid without grumble, or taken as offence, from the manager at North Shields, Durham, and Sunderland.

At Wakefield and at Doncaster there is not any subscription; but it must be allowed the seasons at those towns are very short: Wakefield in particular, cut off by the inevitable pleasing guillotine of Doncaster races.

Mr. Stephen Kemble's subscription at Newcastle the year I am writing this account, is 2s. 6d. to the Boxes, and 1s. 6d. to the Pit.

I hope the reader will pardon this tautology and dry matter, as it may hereafter be thought wonderful, and even may not escape surprise from the southern reader now; as the Boxes in London at present are 6s. and the Pit 3s. 6d.— At the little country theatre at Windsor, the Boxes

are 4s.—at Bath 4s. and were for several seasons 5s. ; and at Liverpool they are 4s.

The success of the theatres, east, west, north, and south, will, I hope, flourish in present and future ages, without being impeded, fapped, and demolished by the devouring French Carmagnols, who threaten to pay us a genteel visit, and with *fee, fo fum*, swallow all us devoted Englishmen up for their breakfasts.

But with the courteous reader's permission, I will now proceed with my narrative of 1785.

The above observations on the foregoing memorandums and tracts must evince the low state the theatre was held in at that time ; and from the ideas formed from the audiences of Hull and York, the subservience of players must have been very great, and in some measure accounts for the liberties I may say, that many persons whose rise has been dependent on lucky circumstances, yet find it a restraint, and difficult to behave as well (as their knowledge will permit) to persons of the stage, without considering that a set of people who obtain property on the stage, which must be done by oeconomy on one part, and with observation and knowledge as to the other : And such, in fact, are the last characters to whom such behaviour should be offered ; for they should reflect, that a player of any tolerable reputation, must have a small portion of common sense or *should*

be possessed of that quality. And as observation is a very good teacher, their observation and experience, must be more general than that of persons confined to a round of one circle in life. The player also must have an idea of wit and repartee, or be a blockhead indeed, when so many great and clever men have left plenty for the mind every day to whet and sharpen his understanding, with a little application. I infer this to be natural for the confined habits of those in the lower class: For, not having their minds more enlarged, relative to their subjects of conversation, they deem stage players dependents as much as themselves, merely because a man pays a price at the door for admittance,—which should be considered is at pleasure, not on compulsion. For the manager may complain of bad receipts, his expences, &c.; all which doleful ditties, produce no effect on the purse or the consideration, till the word fashion gives the lead and the ton. In the proof in point relative to the subscription plays, which I have just presented here to the public, it is almost laughable to find 7½d. mentioned seriously for the pit, and yet *the public not satisfied*; but from the year 1755, or thereabouts, it was raised to the enormous sum of—for 30 nights—Boxes 1s. 6d.—Pit 1s.—and servants admitted; which at present is unknown in any theatre out of my own circuit. This plan continued not only during my

time with Mr. Baker, but from the year of his death, 1777, till the season I am now entering upon as an historian, 1785. Perhaps the Box and Pit subscribers might, on average, amount at York and Hull from 12l. to 14l. per night. At first that subscription was supported by the principal families, but as the plan of annual subscription on such cheap terms grew so familiar, and plays rendered thereby too cheap and common, it is no more strange than true, that several persons of opulence withdrew their names from that narrow scale of subscriptions; and plays by that means were a *dreg*; and it occurred by picking out particular fashionable plays, or such as persons wished to see, they judged would not only be *still cheaper*, but less fatiguing; at the same time saying, if Wilkinſon was not to oblige the town with subscription plays he would be undone.

“Now,” says an observant reader, “Why, Mr. Tate, if the principal persons at York and Hull declined subscribing, how could that effect your interest, if you did not like the subscription, nor think it subservient to your pocket; for your subscription of course must be lessening?” I will answer that as concisely as my stupidity will allow:—Know then, that when the first families declined taking those truly *cheap* tickets, that commodity, like bad French Assignats when not at par, were obliged to be issued in greater quantities,

but with still less advantage; for on that hint all the lower order of barbers, waiters, &c. (not to leave out many of a higher order) would buy subscription tickets, some from 12 to 15 or 20 of each sort for the Boxes and Pit, and the way of security was thus. Mrs. B, the cobbler's wife, would rap at Mr. Alderman Such-a-one's door, and request permission to see the lady of the mansion, which being granted, Mrs. Cobbler-woman was desired to enter and take her chair, that is, if the lady of the house was in a very good and condescending humour (for a great deal depends on that circumstance with even myself and other great personages—for men like plays are very different); so the solicitress for subscription tickets being seated on her great rump, her little rump, or her no rump, or which ever the reader likes best, she proceeds after a few hems for the liberty taken, to extol the lady she is addressing for her general goodness, her numerous and wealthy family, the good actions they daily are bestowing, and the grace with which her sons and daughters constantly shew themselves, whenever they appear in public; all this, with a thousand *et ceteras*, we will suppose not only as fact but well told, and as it was to serve for the next family (perhaps at the next door) the repeater was so perfect as to improve, as every actor and actress (should do) from the frequency of playing the part.

But I must digress a little more to hint, that I believe not any thing gives an additional vigour to foolish ambition, which is inherent to all, than when a tap at the door even to me, Mr. Wilkin-son, to intreat and implore my interest on such an occasion, I answer with all my natural *candour* and *modesty*, "My dear Sir, I am no-body—I have no interest in the world,—you have my wishes, but it is impossible for me to do you any service," eagerly wanting to get rid of my strange visitor. But the artful (and we will suppose) insinuating guest, replies, "O, Mr. Wilkin-son, you do not know your own importance in this town! you are respected by *every body*, you are so good; you could serve me not only more than you imagine, but I would as soon have your interest to serve me as any gentleman's in the town: If I had not known your consequence, I would not, you are sure, have given you this trouble." On this I, Mr. Wilkin-son, fancy the petitioner talks only what is feasible and **WASTLY SENSIBLE**, and it must be all truth. Indeed I feel myself a much greater man than when he rapped at the door, and the suppliant much more sensible and less troublesome, than when he interrupted me and entered my room, when I intended to get rid of him as soon as possible, and give nothing; instead of which my hand slides imperceptibly into my pocket, and I give something where I intended

to give *nothing*; and like other great men, assure him I will do him *all the service I can*. So much for flattery, but people should know how and where to flatter, and not to let it have the least appearance or intention of the kind, otherwise to a man of the world, there is nothing more obvious, or more easily discovered. I have often been praised, sometimes from ignorance, sometimes with design from persons of little understanding, supposing I was so weak as to swallow any thing of that sweet ingredient. I have been told by several I played Lord Ogleby better, or as well as (my friend) Mr. King: Whether they meant flattery or to laugh at me, I will not determine, but this I can aver, that I was *disgusted*. Now the way to have *tickled* such a foolish trout, would have been to have found where my opinion rested, and then I should have said to myself,—“These are all sensible people, I always thought I had merit in those characters, but now certainly find I have more than I allowed myself.”

If these suppositions are natural, the reader will forgive my vanity in the prattling indulgence I have entertained myself with, I beg pardon, and will leave my opinion of flattery and return to the cobbler's, or barber's wife soliciting on a visit for subscription tickets 1784, or any season the reader likes best previous to 1785. The lady of the family having listened to the harangue of her

greatness, and above all, her consequence, at length she smiles, asks the good woman to drink a glass of wine, or perhaps something *more cheering*, after which the purport of her visit is desired. "Why madam," says Mrs. Cobbler, "I have observed you and your good family are great friends to the theatre, and I have a particular reason (hoping it will not give any offence) to know whether you intend taking your usual number of box subscription-tickets for the theatre this winter season at Hull?" The lady pauses, and after a little recollection says, "Why, look ye, *Mrs. What-d'-ye-call-um*, mine and my husband's family are numerous, we have subscribed for some seasons past, because I think it right to give encouragement to Wilkinfon, as he certainly does not spare any expence to entertain us, but we were yesterday after our dinner talking over the subject, and think we shall decline tickets in future:—But, *Mrs. What-d'-ye-call-um*, what may be your reason for asking?" "Why, madam,"—says the other in reply, "my reason for asking is, that I have already made up my mind for ten subscription pit, and fifteen box, and if you would favour me with your commands when you and your family go to the play, you shall have the preference, and I will subscribe for five more box tickets."—"Five more box tickets!" says the lady; "why, how will that be an advan-

tage to you?" "Why, madam, you shall always have box tickets at *two shillings* a-piece on those nights you choose to attend, and thus you will save the expence of full subscription: And I don't doubt but I shall be able, on the average of nights, not only to see a few plays with my husband and daughter, but to clear sufficiently to purchase a new gown and petticoat, like this I have on, madam, which is owing to the product of last year's subscription plays." "Oh!" says the lady, smiling affably, "Good woman,—um,—a gown and petticoat in profit"—the lady sighs, "good woman," claps her hands up and down her knees, "you may be assured we will not take a subscription ticket but from you, and give you timely notice—Good woman, what a friend to Wilkinson!" Many a gown, cap, &c. have I been myself told of by those retailers, as the profits arising from their sale of tickets, besides the including a belly full of plays on such nights as were not of quick sale by the *candle*.

Now this matter though fictitious as to the drawing here, is no more than an exact representation of what the plan of subscription was doubly reduced to; so that instead of decreasing it increased, and ought to be, as it was, diminished; for generally on what were called *weak nights* at the theatre, the holders of tickets either came in loads, or they were hawked in the streets;

and sometimes on a bad rainy night, a box ticket sold for a shilling, and a pit ticket for sixpence : By that mode the theatre had an appearance of an audience it is true, but it was a credit for the audience entirely, not for the manager; for I have often known 11. 10s. and 3l. to be the amount of the cash taken at the doors, and there have been houses in the course of the York and Hull seasons that have looked tolerably; but if payments were necessary on such nights, they would have only proved the shadow of a shade; for if put to the test, *my orders* given for the play must have paid the industrious tradesmen's bills.

The expences of theatres are now so amazingly different, as indeed are most articles in life, within the last 36 years, that in 1758 at Drury-Lane, and in 1760 at Covent-Garden, the charges for benefits were only 60l. At the Hay-Market, in 1793, the charged expences I believe were 150l.*

It was urged that the mode insured an audience, which was comfortable; and it also procured me so much money, which was another comfortable circumstance; but those who argued in that manner, did not, or would not consider (which was worse) the difference of theatrical expence during the last 25 years in every thea-

* Mr. Dykes's boxes (pews I mean) at the New Hull Church, are at present at advanced prices, but when fashion ceases, they may perhaps be lowered.

tre, as to salaries, board, wardrobe, and a thousand *et ceteras*; it was therefore like false lace, the appearance glittered, but would not make the pot boil; and no audience that sees a house full will ever feel for the manager, or lend a moment's thought as to the substantial part. A baker would get great custom if he would sell a good threepenny loaf at the price of a penny roll, but I need not ask where his estate or profit would be from such a ridiculous attempt for business and popularity; therefore with my expences being doubled, aye, trebled, I issued the following notice at the opening of the season, 1785. The task was hazardous, as it was universally condemned, and many serious enemies created even to a degree of spleen and rancour, from the usual numerous purchasers of tickets; those of a superior class judged me wrong, I never would be contented, never thought I got enough, and laughed at my ignorance; and knowing they could either come to the play at any price or let it alone, did *not* think me or my subscription worthy notice or abuse, unless a lack of matter at the tea-table, and then the theatre, the manager, the actors and actresses, in a dearth of conversation, can be taken up as a topic, and thrown under the table as soon as the cards appear; and when the King of Hearts and Queen of Spades—(how will those cards be now

called in France ?)—have had their reign, the manager, or Mrs. Siddons, or any other performer can be picked up again, and dressed either to advantage, or in such colours as the good nature or the ill nature of the mind dictates, who has for want of other amusement, condescended to stoop so low, as even to me, who sometimes am matter for debate——

“ And when my faults or follies are the question,
 “ Each draws his wit out, and begins dissection.”

“ THEATRE-ROYAL, HULL, OCT. 13, 1785.

“ Mr. Wilkinson respectfully informs the
 “ public, his weekly payments are *above treble* the
 “ late Mr. Baker’s, consequently impossible to
 “ undertake the present engagements at the
 “ usual low prices of subscription; as the sala-
 “ ries this year to performers are 40l. weekly, and
 “ the subscription much to the disadvantage of the
 “ theatre, by most of the respectable families *not*
 “ subscribing, but purchasing tickets on the
 “ strongest nights of persons who will venture as
 “ far as to hazard personally the sale of from twelve
 “ to sixteen tickets and upwards, which of course
 “ must be a very material injury to the receipts
 “ of the theatre; and a subscription never taken
 “ by Mr. Wilkinson at *Wakefield, Sheffield,* or
 “ *Doncaster*, where, besides public weeks, plays at
 “ Wakefield Theatre six nights in the week, and

“ four or five constantly at Doncaster, nor any
“ subscription now in any town of equal consequence to Hull and York in the kingdom.—
“ Mr. Wilkinson, however, not entirely to give
“ up a custom, will try a subscription *this year*
“ for *fourteen nights* at Hull and York, at the
“ prices only given at Durham, Shields, and
“ Sunderland;—Box tickets 2s. per night—Pit
“ 1s. 6d. per night. The salaries are increased
“ since Mr. Swalwell’s first year to above 500l.
“ yearly.

“ As to any idea of imposition or offence, Mr.
“ Wilkinson will be very unhappy to even suppose; because as subscribing or not, is a matter
“ of choice, and to those who frequently attend
“ the theatre, the additional price is not equal to
“ the usual purchase of a sale-ticket, and to those
“ who come seldom it is no object, as the fixed
“ prices are still the same; and the less the amount
“ of the subscription, the more the interest of the
“ manager to give the strongest pieces, to induce
“ the public to make the theatre fashionable, as
“ well as to patronize and protect his unremitting
“ endeavours to please and entertain.”

The public, it is certain were not satisfied;
but I am sure any candid thinking person, who
understands even a little of theatres, must allow,
that such alteration must have been made, or the

property must have been almost, if not quite, ruined : It never enters into the head of any auditor, that those nights before the benefits are my only game for winning or losing ; for though it is true on my scheme of the Hull, York, and Leeds, I take half the receipts on benefit-nights, after *my* deducting 4*l.* or 5*l.* yet only a few of those benefits are great, many what may be termed decent, and a great many very *indecent* ; which on the word of a manager always shocks me ; as indeed to speak seriously they well may : For it will easily be conceived by the share of a middling house, I barely receive my expences, and by my share of a bad benefit-night, am in too great a truth a considerable loser. If asked, "Why, poor Mr. Wilkinson, how you are used ? how clever and good a man to take all these pains, and drudge as you do for the public ! Pray, how do you live so comfortably, and without profits ?" "Why, Sir," I answer, solemnly, seriously, and honourably, "I do live comfortably, so does my family ; I have the credit and happiness to bring them forward in the world, and the world, in general, I hope, are glad to see it, and I am proud to acknowledge it is by the public all this has been done, for which I have as much gratitude as my friends could wish me, and while master of breath, will never deny, but glory in the acknowledgment. However it is to the *public weeks* in the year, not

to the long seasons and the shares of benefits, with three weeks only tolerable houses at York, Hull, or Leeds that I am indebted; for my profits will be superior on a public week to any three weeks on an average where even the best benefits may be concerned."

In short the matter, of which I have been tediously relating, has no business, unless as historical, in this journal, and with the public opinion I fear in general will be—"Damn you and your subscription, you either have one or have not one! Why are we to read such stuff about either you or your playhouse?" And as I feel that remark as just, I submit to it. "Then," say you, "Why not retract and cut it out, for you have wrote nonsense enough already?" Why, that is very true, but my reason is, the subject relates to an alteration material to the chain of the history of the York and Hull Theatres, and my own *good* self; and I judged it necessary to the historical play and York Register.

That plan of the subscription as mentioned, Box 2s. and Pit 1s. 6d. was judged exorbitant, and from that time to this day decreased to five Box and two Pit tickets as purchasers; but I hope to see the time when the season before the benefits will be in a greater degree fashionable: Indeed I wonder they are *not*, as I have the pull of novelty, with all the new, strongest, and most per-

fect plays. And good business at the early part of the season, and in the *middle* of the *winter*, would rather help than injure the receipts towards the latter end. You smile sarcastically—as I am speaking for self—if a fault forgive me, reader: For how is it to be avoided when we feel and mean to touch something real, yet cannot touch.

I make this book a matter of conversation, and only beg leave to talk, and dare say that is the only gratification I shall obtain; for write I cannot, but can make my *mark* and *remarks*, and all can do the same, even in the lowest situation:—Indeed old men, like old women, will be talking, though the necessary apparatus for breathing is wanted to convey articulation and sense. So it is only throwing me on the shelf of neglect; therefore, with all my follies on my head, I bid adieu to subscription, and will introduce a wise engagement for Hull, the season, 1785, which I have been treating about so long, and for a second time will introduce Signior Scaglioni and his Dancing Dogs; for as they had brought good houses at York, which is not so populous as Hull, I formed the phantom or the dream of wonderful galleries at that town; but it proved contrary to my sagacity and fore-knowledge: For the sailors, whom I expected like a shoal of herrings at Yarmouth, were disgusted at such *low stuff* as

they termed the entertainment; the Hull audience coincided in the same opinion, and Signior Scaglioni and Mr. Manager were left to bark and growl at each other. You see the various shifts we aim at, and when we expect to succeed, like other schemes in human life, they end in air and bubble, not without the *squeak*—and then we must seek something new.

“Of all the passions which possess mankind,

“The love of novelty rules most the mind.”

So in that exigence with my dogs, I tried “George Barnwell,” which, I expected from application, as it had not been done for some seasons, would draw a decent house, but instead of a tolerable audience, (for the true sense of the Hull Million be it recorded) it was not only an overflowing theatre in every part, but one of the best receipts I had known for years: That finished the Dogs—(a pize on them)—but George Barnwell was a good lad to me, and though he was hanged, put me into an excellent good humour.

It may be with truth averred, that George Barnwell has drawn more tears than the pompous tragedies of “Alexander the Great,” “All for Love,” &c. Popular prejudice ran high against this play previous to its representation: Every one knew it to be founded on a well-

known ancient ballad; and so contemptible an opinion did the critics entertain of it, that on its first night, thousands of the old ballad were purchased, in order to divert themselves by drawing comparisons and turning the whole into ridicule: But these all-wise gentlemen were highly disappointed; the merit of the play conquered their prejudices; it presented them with scenes—written so truly to the heart—that they were compelled to subscribe to their power, and drop their ballads to take up their handkerchiefs.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot help mentioning two anecdotes relative to the effects produced by this tragedy: The first is related by Dr. Barrowby (a gentleman of veracity) of a youth or apprentice to an eminent merchant in London, who, forcibly struck by the fate of the unhappy Barnwell, confessed, that being seduced by the arts of a wicked woman, he had robbed his master: How far his guilt might have extended he shuddered to think, but fortunately their commerce was totally put a stop to by his accidentally seeing the above play. The Doctor adds, that upon a proper representation of the whole to his master, he not only forgave him but restored him to favour. Thus rescued from the paths of destruction, he afterwards became a valuable member of the community.

A similar instance is mentioned since that time, which the late Mr. Rofs, I am told, did attest: He, if I am rightly informed, for many years regularly received a present of Twenty Guineas from a gentleman, an entire stranger to him, whose apprentice had happily been reformed by seeing him in the character of George Barnwell.

A fair question here offers: Have the insolent preachers at Hull an opportunity of producing such good effects from their volcanoes vomited forth against the stage? No!—How should it be? as their doctrines consist only of pride, self-ambition, and every uncharitable ingredient; presuming that their congregations at Hull (to use Shakspeare's words) are as easily led by the nose as asses are. Indeed the forementioned anecdotes prove the utility of a theatre, and is a confirmation of the following extract from a morning paper of Feb. 27, 1794.

“As the establishment of well-regulated theatres, in an immense Metropolis, is acknowledged to be a measure of great public policy, the objects of that policy are surely promoted, if the situations of those theatres are so widely apart, as to distribute with convenience the Drama's rational entertainment. Nor is amusement alone thereby promoted: For while, by

“the various means of employment which a
“theatre affords, it contributes to the subsistence
“of a great number of poor persons; while it
“aids the public revenue, and yields a very con-
“siderable assistance to trade and manufacture in
“its vicinity, it preserves the many, whose even-
“ing hours hang idly on their hands, from pur-
“suits of dangerous tendency.”*

This insertion in some measure explains the mistaken notion inculcated by preachers, that the money taken at a theatre, is taken out of the town. Mr. Dykes wished Mr. Pycock to undertake the building of a new chapel at Hull, on very low terms, urging, that it was all undertaken for charity: Mr. Pycock archly asked Mr. Dykes to inform him, whether he intended to preach for nothing? But so much does the contrary inclination prevail predominant in that benevolent gentleman's disposition, that his boxes are let at a most enormous price, and the bell tinkled every ten minutes last November, to put the people in mind the pew-keeper was waiting with impatience.

Indeed, so far from taking money from Hull of late seasons, I am truly a considerable loser, as any person or persons are welcome, nay requested

* A petition was delivered for another Theatre in London, Feb. 1794, signed with ten thousand signatures.

to satisfy their curiosity and disbelief at any fifteen minutes leisure : Consequently when Mr. Dykes mentioned 300l. more than was taken, saying at the same time, it should have been given to the poor, he asserted a *direct falsehood*, which does not, I may *affirm*, become a gentleman any where, but from the pulpit, is wicked in the extreme; as he obliges his congregation to listen and believe in scandal and falsehood, whereby the holy priest is rendered impure, cankered, fullied, and venomous, and the bright rays of truth and benignity, which should grace the pulpit, become tarnished, and lose their lustre and glory, and are overwhelmed in shadows, clouds, and darkness. As to the season Mr. Dykes mentioned at Hull, 1792-3, I was on my word of honour, 90l. deficient, except receiving as a livelihood, only half the receipt of my benefit night, and 1l. 1s. 6d. weekly as manager.

The season 1785-6, the history of which I have not by any means finished, a Mr. BATES acted Motley in "Dead Alive," on Friday, October 28, and was the Harlequin the next season following at Drury-Lane : He was afterwards the leading comedian at Manchester, and is since gone to the fashionable resort for country actors, America.

A Mr. DIXON, a gentleman tonfior, was to have acted Lothario, but great anger arose against me;

one gentleman in particular, a theatrical amateur, wrote and printed a few gasconades, and a party were determined to prevent the theatre being degraded, and a disturbance was likely to have ensued; to prevent which, as it was no pecuniary object, and not what I myself wished particularly to justify, and indeed had merely complied with from repeated solicitations, and meant it on my part as an act of humanity to a man in distress; but I did not see why I should be perplexed, or run the hazard of being insulted by others for a matter as indifferent to myself as to my opposers, therefore I put a final stop to the business and altercation on the subject, by the following advertisement.

THEATRE-ROYAL, HULL, Dec. 27, 1785.

“ Mr. Wilkinfon flatters himself, that in point
 “ of will (though not in ability) not any future
 “ manager can ever be more zealous than himself
 “ to please the public: However, he is not so
 “ opinionated as to imagine himself not liable to
 “ error; on the contrary, in the present instance,
 “ he thinks himself much to blame in having given
 “ permission for Mr. Dixon to perform to-morrow
 “ evening. In fact, the impropriety was occasioned
 “ by hurry, (and not premeditated, as has
 “ been imagined,) for Mr. Wilkinfon actually
 “ refused him last week,—but Wednesday, De-

“ cember 28, being unexpectedly thrown upon
“ his hands by the refusal of Messrs. Wood,
“ Wilfon, and Porter, and also by the Hull Band
“ of Musicians, to whom it was then offered, and
“ in consequence of such refusals, Mr. Dixon’s
“ request was granted, without an idea of giving
“ offence to any person or persons whatever.
“ Nor indeed would such a performance have
“ been without a similar instance; as, a hair-
“ dresser of this town performed the identical
“ part of Lothario, when the late Mr. Baker
“ was manager, in October 1756. But Mr. Wil-
“ kinson, impressed with gratitude for the many
“ favours conferred on him, and also convinced
“ that an universal opinion prevails, that such an
“ undertaking by Mr. Dixon would be deemed
“ improper and far from agreeable to the sense of
“ the audience in general; Mr. Wilkinson there-
“ fore *will not*, in duty, respect, interest, and in-
“ clination, permit Mr. Dixon’s performance on
“ any account whatever, and hopes that Mr.
“ Dixon and his acquaintance will be convinced
“ of the impropriety of his attempting to act a
“ part, in opposition to the will of persons of
“ rank, and the determined judgment of the
“ town in general, whose patronage Mr. Wilkin-
“ son must ever wish to preserve, and will always
“ be proud and happy to acknowledge.

“ N. B. Not any paragraphs so liable to
“ mistakes as theatricals, sent often from a dis-

"tance and printed in a hurry.—Last week at
 "London was advertised, *Not acted these* four
 "years, *for the second time this season, The OR-*
 "PHAN."

Not that it would have been the first barber, or the only murder committed on the stage; and as the man wished to try his abilities, the public would then have had an opportunity (if they chose to attend, which was certainly a matter of choice) of exercising their own judgments and good nature, and might have suffered Lothario to have died in peace, or by their decree of *damnation*, have sent him to the shades below. The reader will observe I am speaking of a master-barber of renown, clever in his business, and now transplanted to London City.

Mr. BROWNE, well known in Yorkshire, a son of the late Mrs. Browne, of the Rooms at Scarborough, and son-in-law to the well-known Mr. Donner of Scarborough, who is as generous as he is facetious, and as facetious as he is generous, and who has a constitution so good, I think he might give me one half, and yet not be the worse, for I wish not to possess his precious estate to his injury:—But my old acquaintance, Mr. Donner, has too much of a good thing.

The said Mr. Matthew Browne had served his clerkship to the law, with Mr. Kirby of Hull, and

I had been intimate with him from his youth. After some youthful adventures, not without extravagances, Master Matthew Browne went to America, to settle there as a regular professor of the law, and there I have been given to understand would in all probability have greatly flourished, but the disturbances there caused his unexpected and sudden return. Soon after his landing on his native shore, he determined on what he had long had a predilection for, which was the stage; in some part owing, I suppose, from the long acquaintance with me, which might possibly have given him an inclination for the drama. He was married, and had a young family, so he had much to struggle for as well as with. He had acted at various places previous to his visit to me at Hull, and with good general success, as he possessed then, what he does now, great discernment, general observation, and good natural talents, aided by a very liberal education. He had been well received in Edinburgh, Dublin, and most of our principal country theatres, and his visit to see his old friend Tate, was to be attended with paying the road expences, by playing a few nights, and having a benefit on the usual terms. He acted Hamlet, on Wednesday, Jan. 11; after that three or four more characters, in all which he was well received, and as may be supposed, several persons were willing to serve and notice him from their

knowledge of him as a Hull sprig in his youth; so there did not seem the least probability of any intervention arising, to prevent his having a good benefit; but in the interim, Mrs. Robinson lost her mate, whose dissolution had been weekly expected from a rapid decay, which baffled all art: The widow of course on such a solemn occasion, could not resist, as in duty bound, making her griefs and clamours roar upon his death; but unfortunately near that crisis her benefit-night was appointed, and some of her warm friends almost insisted on Mr. Browne's taking her night, and Mrs. Robinson taking his: Now this was by no means reasonable; but we are too apt, however sensible, to only see and argue on one side, and that the side which pleases ourselves; however, an indifferent person will easily decide, that had Mr. Browne been an established well-known performer at Hull, Mrs. Robinson's night might have obliged those gentlemen, had he approved the change; and certainly as a man he had the right of refusal, if it combated his interest; and Mr. Browne had a stronger excuse, which was, that he had only acted the part of Hamlet on the 11th of January, so was not known sufficiently to have a plea with the public for a night of reward for services performed—for Mrs. Robinson's was the night but one following his acting of Hamlet, and the intermediate night Mr. Matthew Browne did

not act. This positive refusal to change the night gave great offence to many who espoused the widow, as they were wishing to supply her wants, without considering that Mr. Browne had as many as Valentine, in "Love for Love."

"SIR SAMP. Did you come a volunteer into the world? or did I, with the lawful authority of a parent, press you into the service.

"VAL. I know no more why I came, than you do why you call'd me. But here I am, and if you don't mean to provide for me, I desire you would leave me as you found me.

"SIR SAMP. With all my heart:—Come, strip, uncase, and go naked out of the world, as you came into't.

"VAL. My clothes are soon put off:—But you must also divest me of reason, thought, passions, inclinations, affections, appetites, senses, and the huge train of attendants that you begat along with me.

"SIR SAMP. Body o'me, what a many headed monster have I propagated!

"VAL. I am of myself, a plain, easy, simple creature, and to be kept at small expence; but the retinue you gave me are craving and invincible; they are so many devils that you have rais'd and will have employment.

"SIR SAMP. Oons! what had I to do to get children;—can't a private man be born without

"all these followers?—Why nothing under an
"Emperor should be born with appetites."

Now I am certain, on reflection, those gentlemen would allow, that had any one been put in Mr. Browne's place, they would have acted as he did; but on the other hand it was to serve a lady, and that lady, like Niobe, all tears: She tried and tried, and in spite of nerves, and the many disagreeable circumstances, that seriously speaking, she must have encountered, to have made a sudden appearance go down, yet she mounted the boards on Tuesday January 17, 1786, and all arrayed in mournful black, she appeared, to an universal greeting and a remarkably genteel audience, in the character of Lady Randolph, and after the awful, decent, and usual ceremony of a loud applause and a courtesy,—again repeated—a sigh and another applause—according to the fashion, after a few tears, the use of the white handkerchief, a tremble, a totter, a short retirement to cruel grief, all such ceremonies being adjusted, Lady Randolph gazed, and after pronouncing faintly and tremulously,

"Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy sounds

"Accord with my soul's sadness"——

the vibration and articulation strengthened by degrees, and all went on smooth and quiet, with three good attendants, silence, attention, and applause.

I produced myself as Old Norval, and Mrs. Robinson acted Lady Randolph with more than a common degree of merit well throughout. But the offence Mr. Browne had given did not give his friends that night the power of preventing several pointed marks of displeasure and disgrace when he appeared in the scenes of Glenalvon, a part in which he deserved much more praise than censure, and was I think the best character I had seen him play. Mrs. Robinson's eldest daughter was to have acted "Tom Thumb," but the death of the father prevented that ludicrous attempt, and a gentleman of Hull drew up the following paragraph:

Theatre-Royal, Hull.

JANUARY 17, 1786.

DOUGLAS, TOM THUMB,

AND THE

TRUE BRITISH TAR.

"The solemn scene in which Mrs. ROBINSON
 "has been lately engaged, will, she hopes, inte-
 "rest the PUBLIC HUMANITY in her favour, so
 "as to render the following APOLOGY almost
 "unnecessary. Though so recently deprived of
 "a valuable husband, Mrs. Robinson, however
 "reluctant to such an early appearance on the
 "stage, would willingly sacrifice HER feelings
 "on this trying occasion; to which she is the

“ more impelled, on account of the arrangement
“ of the theatre admitting of no alteration, from
“ the circumstance of the company’s short stay
“ in *this* place; and trusting that CANDOUR will
“ not impute her behaviour to want of DELICACY,
“ would wish, if it were in her power, to add
“ energy to her professional exertions at her ap-
“ proaching benefit; at once to evince her sense
“ of the generous patronage with which she has
“ been honoured, and to aim at a provision for
“ the remaining OBJECTS OF HER AFFECTION:
“ Yet humbly hopes, that whilst dedicating her
“ personal endeavours to the PUBLIC, she shall
“ not be censured for expressing a desire that HER
“ DAUGHTER may be excused from attempting a
“ COMIC *character*, when the present *affecting*
“ situation of the family must subject them to
“ impressions of a different nature.”

It was rather a disastrous circumstance for Mr. Browne, for though it did not destroy his house, his boxes in particular suffered a material injury. To prevent this hurt to his fame and pocket, as far as lay in his own power, at the bottom of his benefit-bill was the following paragraph:

Theatre-Royal, Hull.*JANUARY 20, 1786.***Mr. BROWNE's BENEFIT.****Othello, with Arthur and Emmeline.**

“ Having been informed, that some prejudices
“ have been and are entertained against me, on
“ the score of refusing to exchange nights with
“ Mrs. ROBINSON, I beg leave to state to the
“ PUBLIC the motives which induced me to act
“ as I have done; and I flatter myself, when im-
“ partially weighed and considered, I shall be ac-
“ quitted of the charge of INHUMANITY, which
“ I am sorry to find has been attributed to me.

“ My engagement with Mr. WILKINSON being
“ of that nature, that my reward is altogether
“ to depend on the liberality of the PUBLIC; I
“ could not conceive but that an alteration in the
“ night must prove of very essential injury to MY
“ interest,—as at the time of the application I
“ had only been a very few days in town, and
“ performed but one character,—it seemed to me
“ an act of great presumption, and indeed bor-
“ dering on impertinence, to put up my name
“ for a benefit at so short a notice as TWO
“ DAYS, and without having put it in the power
“ of the public to judge whether I WAS ENTITLED

“to their favour and patronage in the line of my
“profession.

“I beg leave to submit it to the consideration
“of every dispassionate mind, that I have tra-
“velled nearly four hundred miles, at a very
“considerable expence; that I have a wife and
“family dependent on me for support; and that
“HUMANITY towards them most strongly en-
“forced to me, that I should use every FAIR and
“HONOURABLE means of advancing my own in-
“terest. A week’s notice is what every esta-
“blished performer is entitled to, and has been
“generally found to be full short. For a visitor
“like myself to presume to treat my FRIENDS IN
“PARTICULAR, and the PUBLIC IN GENERAL, in
“so CAVALIER a manner, as to give but TWO
“DAYS notice of my benefit, appeared to me
“an act of arrogance, which I hope I shall never
“give cause to be imputed to me. I beg leave
“to be believed on my assurance, that could I
“have done any service to Mrs. ROBINSON, with-
“out an apparent injury to myself, I would with
“great pleasure have exerted every endeavour to
“that end; and as I have ventured so far on the
“reliance of the liberality of the public in this
“town, I flatter myself that any fortuitous cir-
“cumstance of the kind alluded to, will not be
“suffered to predominate to my disadvantage.
“Firmly relying on the candour of those whom

"I have the honour to address, I remain with
 "great respect,

"the public's

"most obedient humble servant,

M. BROWNE."

The theatre was decently filled, his well-wishers judged him perfectly right; as indeed, if an actor may be allowed to think for himself, (which is presuming a great deal) I do not see how he could have acted otherwise, as he had only then performed one night, and had it been more distant he would have had no great reason to complain, as Mrs. Robinson's was one of the best nights that could be appointed in the season. There however the matter rested, and the Tuesday following, with Mr. and Mrs. Smith's benefit, the Hull campaign finished.

The York season 1786 commenced with strong novelty to induce and seduce. Mr. Matthew Browne of Scarborough and Mrs. Robinson were quite new to the York audience, yet there was hardly a decent house for the first month, Mr. Browne's benefit excepted; yet he was held in great favour, and had a numerous acquaintance. I have been more particular relative to the said Mr. Browne, as he is the identical Matthew Browne, Member of the British Convention at Edinburgh, 1793. Whether he had not better

have stood forth as an honest attorney, or a good actor, and stuck to reason and *our shop*, is not for me to determine, as he has had a life of experience, and is old enough to judge for himself. I am inclined to wish he had been less aspiring, thinking it might have been as creditable and more conducive to his real peace, happiness, and prosperity: but some people like to dabble in hot water rather than cold; I will therefore leave him to wade through his surrounding troubled torrents, and hoping he will steer himself into quiet harbour, I will return to the dainty Widow Robinson, who came from Hull to York, January 1786, where she was well received, and was noticed by some ladies of fashion, by whom she was not only invited but strongly patronised.

Mr. MILLS obtained deservedly great credit for his performance of Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant that year. He had not only played several seasons at Edinburgh, but had been a country manager in various parts of Scotland, by which means he was become a perfect master of the language, and spoke it more easy, natural, and fluent, than any performer within the ken of my observation.

Miss Wilkinon acted Fanny in "The Clandestine Marriage" with great good fortune, and was much admired in all those sort of characters, which added to her quick study, made her of conse-

quence to me and the public. She acted the Country Girl the 25th of Feb. for her own benefit, with approbation and great applause: In short, she was universally liked; but at the latter end of the York season she received an offer from Covent Garden for the following winter, also another engagement for the summer at Liverpool, which was too lucrative and alluring to be refused, and before the expiration of the York season I lost Miss Wilkinson, to repair which, take her for all in all, was impossible; but as it was irreparable, I was of course obliged to submit and drudge as well as I could till something clever offered. My consolation was, that the loss of Mrs. Jordan, Miss Wilkinson, Mrs. Robinson, and others, would always be the case, as the London managers will ever seize all such as attract fame so well, as to reach the ears of the London monarchs of Drury-lane and Covent-garden.—We little curs must submit to their strong *bow-words*; and as Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned to earth, &c. so Garrick, Barry, Oldfield, and Cibber have gone through the same ceremony: and if plays on the whole are not better acted in London than 30 years ago, in the country they certainly are, if compared to the same distance of time; and the London Theatres would astonish the dead personages could they rise from their graves, just

for a single peep at the magnificent amendment as to theatres, music, &c. &c.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith's last benefit was with me, and was on Saturday the 1st of April: Not an improper memorandum; for Mrs. Smith stepped from Mrs. Sullen, where she was very clever, to exhibit herself as a second Abington, in Scrub, by which she got about the same additional reputation.

Mr. BETTERTON, from Edinburgh, acted Archer that night, but his first appearance was in Jaffier, March the 30th: He had squandered a little fortune at Newry and other towns in Ireland, and was then, and possibly is still, greatly improved. He was bred a dancing-master; his person is remarkably genteel and elegantly made: He moves with a grace: His voice is good, but he wants ear to give modulation and variety; by reason of which many persons are apt to pronounce his voice bad, which is by no means the case: He has a rapid study, and many strong recommendations for the stage; but he is fond of himself—(Who is not?)—rates his abilities at the highest pitch, and does not pay sufficient regard for his own comfort to oeconomy; besides, he always wishes to manage the manager, and managers do not like that. He was with me some three or four seasons; and was engaged in 1791, the summer season, at Liverpool, and had the greatest receipt ever known there either before or

since for his benefit; it actually amounted to 230l. I believe he is now acting in Ireland.

My benefit was that year on Easter Tuesday, April 18, 1786, General Burgoyne's then new comedy of "The Heirefs," and for a treat, Mr. O'Keefe's Sequel to the Poor Soldier, of "Love in the Camp; or Patrick in Prussia." I got it up with new scenery and every care, expecting a great run from the connection with that favourite "The Poor Soldier;" but instead of being tolerably received, it was most intolerably disliked, even to a degree of displeasure, and was condemned, like "Love in the City," in London, as never to appear again, though "The Romp" has gone glibly down there, and every where, for many seasons :* So our own opinions we at times really do not truly know; and I request the reader's attention to this little incident relative to "Patrick in Prussia," as thereby takes root a tale which will sprout in 1792.

But it will be perceived that I really was attacked out of the theatre as well as in, for offering such an entertainment to the audience.— Poor Patrick suffered such disgrace, that a gentleman, who has since filled the chair of authority in York city, asked me what I meant by such wilful insult? I replied, that the accusation was certainly undeserved, as it was so constantly re-

* "The Romp" is only a ludicrous curtailment from "Love in the City."

peated in London with encores and great applause: But I was answered tartly, that he supposed I had read the farce, and if I had, must have known such stuff should not be offered to a discerning public. I had not seen that farce acted in London at that time, it is true, but I will give an account of it when I travel as far as the metropolis the year following.

About that time I suffered a loss in Mr. and Mrs. Powell; for though Miss Wilkinson, the bone of contention, was going, they would not continue; and go they did.

Mr. Southgate, the very promising young actor, whom I have before mentioned, as having seen the autumn previous at the Sheffield Theatre, I engaged for York, and on April 4, 1786, he acted *unaccountably* for the benefit of his present father-in-law: I say *unaccountably*, as it did so turn out. He performed that evening Billy Bristle, but not near so well as I judged he had acted that part at Sheffield. It is not the fault of natural abilities, that he has not cut a more conspicuous figure, for Nature has not been niggardly in her gifts as to many requisites, so as to have established him long before this period as an excellent low comedian. But at his first onset with me he was so very careless, (sorry am I to say) that all my prophecy of future greatness vanished, for he gave way to a careless and fixed indolence, which

left natural genius to shift for itself, without self-instruction, or any gardener to weed the neglected soil.

The reader will be anxious to learn if the said comic Southgate, is not reformed since the hint given of his having entered into the honourable state of matrimony? Why yes, kind reader, I have the real satisfaction and pleasure to aver, he is really much better, but not near the mark he might still arrive at; and that alteration for the better is chiefly owing to the uncommon regularity of the father, mother, and wife, he is happily (for himself) connected with. As the papa is as regular, not only as a clock, but the best regulated one that any professor has hitherto found out for a more perfect knowledge of the longitude. Mr. Southgate would be much better than he now is, if he did not enter into the universal error of believing Thomas Hiccup (or some such companion) did not aver he was the best actor in the world; which, too often happens in the country, and what I would discredit if the same incense were offered at my own shrine; because I wish to believe and be convinced of what I before might have doubted, but have not yet found out for want of proper evidence and testimony.

Mr. Southgate's person on the stage is neat to a degree, he possesses humour, has good expression as to articulation, but, like a singer with a bad ear,

he wants consideration to modulate and give a temperance and smoothness. He is a *great* favourite with three parts of our audiences—(perhaps a misfortune)—and would he pay more attention to character, situation, and propriety, he would soon find his theatrical materials gain model and polish. He will too often sacrifice propriety to gain a laugh, supposing when that is purchased, no matter by what means extorted, the business is fully accomplished: And for fear the joke should be spoiled is always ready with his casting vote of self-laughter to gain his election.

I fear Shakspeare would term that *villainous*, and a *pitiful ambition* in the *knave* that uses it: I mean surely so when not preserved within tolerable bounds. The remark is far from being made as satirical, but the contrary, full of good wishes and sincere regard, as Mr. Southgate possesses real talents, has youth and (I hope in Providence) time for a thorough cultivation, and that flowers will spring where only hitherto the brambles have taken a bad root within the fertile soil.

Shakspear's directions to the players cannot too often be read as a first duty *after they have said their prayers*. Let Mr. Southgate take his sullied talents from the damp and rust where they have lain in part neglected, and he will by proper care, application, and attention, like good silver-plate, be repaid by the shining of his own works, and

the Muses' looking-glass will permit him to parade and gaze each day, where he may pride himself on that great praise-worthy and honourable achievement, the acknowledging he has received improvement from reflection. As a certain proof of his being a spendthrift of his talents, when he is evidently wrong he will often oblige the most rigid auditors to laugh against their own conviction; which is strong evidence that it is his fault only that he is not much better, and would find his reward, by trying to be more right and less wrong, which would not be the least increase of either fatigue or trouble.

“ Had his comic genius but stirr'd in study
“ With half the spirit it has dar'd in marring,
“ How might his fame have grac'd our British drama:
“ But as it is, how many pages has he blotted.”

His Starved Friar in the Duenna, Rundy in the Farmer are strong instances; in Goldfinch in the Road to Ruin he possesses great spirit, but like a good colt he wants breaking in, for he sets off at a full gallop without any guide or reins; also his Bribe in Columbus, and many others, though very extravagant, are so irresistibly comic, that it is ocular proof demonstrative that he is *modestly* unacquainted with his own intrinsic worth, the which mine if he would explore, would produce an effect greatly to the addition of his fame,

afford self-credit and satisfaction, and give pleasure to the public and all his real well-wishers. A very good comedian I must note refused the whimsical characters of Bribon and Doctor Dolores, as not either of them worthy of study or producing a smile from the audience, but that is not a clear case, as the two parts of Doctor Dolores and Bribon never fail exciting peals of laughter every time they are performed by Mr. Penfon and Mr. Southgate. A director may be right, though *himself* may lack more direction; for that is another point. And I must observe that the stage is a hackneyed subject even from the ablest hands, and requires new matter to dish up at intervals, like a modern play-bill with bad interludes, to make up quantity, however deficient in quality.

"Ay, but," says the reader (like Mr. Johnson in the Rehearsal) "Mr. Bayes I don't see much business this wise remark has to do here, for the plot stands still!"

"Bayes. The plot stands still! Why what the devil is a play good for but to bring in fine things."

So, as the Wandering Patentee, if not permitted to talk nonsense, (like bad music between the acts) and avoid my natural turn for aircastle digression, it would be all fast asleep and a dull matter-of-fact conversation: However I beg par-

don, and shall be proud to have it granted, and set forward once more with the Yorkshire

“ Stage history of tragic-comic jest,

“ To make you laugh, or sleep, as you like best.”

If I can but keep you in good humour, I shall be overpaid; for I know by experience, that it is much easier to get into the fulks than out of them. So, wishing that Mr. Southgate may improve and ruminate, before I finish the York season 1786, I will remark in my catalogue of personages, that Mr. and Mrs. NUNNS arrived in May at York, and on the second day or evening of that pleasant month, when shepherds pipe and play, and the turtle doves do bill and coo, did Mrs. Nunns take a kind of charge of Mrs. Smith's post of honour, who was determined to quit my regiment of comedians, and Madam Nunns against my opinion would perform Letitia Hardy: It was not with my cheerful acquiescence; for though I did not doubt her ability, yet on viewing the *tout ensemble*, I did not wish that to be the first specimen of genius; and it too often is the case for persons rushing into an appearance of a character to satisfy their own ideas of all being complete, when a part less of the airy very juvenile kind, would be better; for merit discovered by the audience in favour of the performer, suffers less the rigour of criticism, and makes way for the ap-

pearance afterwards, where figure is not at first so applicable but liable to censure.

Mrs. Pritchard was right when she made her appearance in Lady Macbeth, on her visit to Dublin: For her figure being applicable, gave a weight, propriety, and dignity to the character itself, and prevented irony or sarcastic jest popping in its head to smile at established merit. Had Mrs. Pritchard instead of Lady Macbeth acted Clarinda or any juvenile part, the Dublin audience, very probably, from expecting wonders, on the contrary might have forgot undoubted merit and excellence of acting from the impropriety of person for the character, and have let ill-natured ridicule have prevailed over justice and talents universally allowed. For the difference of space between London and Dublin makes great alteration of judgment and fair criticism: The London audience had been familiarised to view Mrs. Pritchard with pleasure from the early part of her life, where from the slender waist, time had increased and given her the full *en bon point*. So that the Maria from the age of twenty to that of fifty being constantly in view, (Mrs. Pritchard acting, in general, four or five nights out of six) by such familiar use to the eye, the spectators forgot all such error; as the little blemishes that were inherent to nature, by degrees sunk with the weight of years, and a decay of life's

pillars for their support; but her excellencies rose superior to what was wanting: And the spirit, vigour, whim and fancy she supported in a Beatrice was so truly good, as to convince all who then saw her of a truly great prodigy—Age flourishing with such expression, vivacity, and nature, and the characters so imprinted, that allowing the moderns may boast of youth, they never can see Mrs. Pritchard as a Beatrice excelled. I therefore advised Mrs. Nunns, of whom I have been writing, to act Mrs. Oakley, &c. and when well received as an actress (which she really was) then to fire away in those *dear agreeable amiables*, such as we would wish others to think and we ourselves wish to be, and of course fancy we really are. Mrs. Nunns had a great share of merit, and the reader will find we jogged on very comfortably for a year and a quarter; a long time, when we reflect, that Garrick says,

“A year’s alliance is with us an age.”

And indeed when I come to relate the separation, I must avow it as Mr. and Mrs. Nunns’s fault and not mine; for though new faces may please the *manager* and an *audience*, it is not the wish of either side to part with good performers, if they will be reasonable; for the chasm such departures make in the catalogue of plays is incredible, and the inconvenience not describable. That Mr. and

Mrs. Nunns may have deservedly done well since their departure, I do not dispute; but with the rolling up hill and down the dale I may venture to guess like the rolling stone, they are not overloaded with mofs.

Mr. Nunns's first appearance at York and Leeds in May 1786, was in Old Doiley, a part he sustained with a good share of whim and pleasant humour. I have a letter by me, where Mr. Nunns assures me, he had such an opinion of my worth, integrity, and judgment, he would take the *ghost's word* (meaning mine) for a thousand pounds; and such letters and affirmation I relished, as it assured me he spoke the truth when complimenting me.

Before I take Mr. and Mrs. Nunns to Leeds, three or four more personages arrest my stay at York,—no less than Mrs. CRAWFORD for one, who in her younger days, as *Mrs. Dancer*, in the years 1753, 54, and 56, had been the heroine of the York stage, and being on her return from a Scotch expedition, acted two nights at York. Her first appearance was the Grecian Daughter, Saturday May 20th, 1786, and Lady Randolph on May 25. The prices were raised to those of London at that time; but they are since advanced there, boxes to six shillings, and pit three shillings and sixpence.

Mrs. Crawford introduced Mr. and Mrs. ILIFF. The latter was to supply Miss Wilkinson's singing cast. Mr. Iliff acted Douglas to Mrs. Crawford's Lady Randolph, in which part his figure, youth, and sense of his author, with the aid of his able instructress, made him appear to very great advantage.

It may be asked when Mrs. Crawford acted, Why was the admission raised to London prices? Which, though not readily comprehended, it is less out of reason than the examiner will readily conceive; for those first rate performers, will not only expect, but if they play, *will be paid* a considerable sum for each night's performance; and if persons will not be contented with a common bill of fare, but instead of a plain joint, wish for turtle, venison, pheasant, and wild-fowl, with pine apple, &c. why it must be paid for: And though York and Hull and every one of my towns can sport *whenever they please* elegant boxes, yet when those theatres are full at common prices, the receipts are by no means equal to Edinburgh, Bath, Dublin, or Liverpool, and other very large towns where numbers abound; consequently the share allowed for the labour would not be a bait sufficient for the great guns to fire; and no one will dispute but the perquisite is always prevailing to London performers, and the greatest Generals like gain as well as fame.

Mr. STEPHEN KEMBLE, at that time, returned with Mrs. KEMBLE (whom he had married in London) where she had made her appearance as Miss SATCHELL better than a year before. Mrs. S. Kemble acted Miss Melville, in "More Ways than One," at York, May 26, and well, (as the London audience could testify) * but she was so extremely ill, it prevented his appearance the next night in Othello, and indeed at York that season, as it was the last performance but one.

I will in an instant convey the reader to Leeds and open the Theatre with Douglas, where and when, on Monday, May 29, Mrs. Crawford acted Lady Randolph most admirably, and at the raised prices she had acted the week before at York: There was a very good but not great house; and though I wished her well, and admired her talents, yet her temper was so variable, (like a bad season, more rain than sunshine,) that I never regretted her departure, though I did and do respect her, not only as an actress, and think she has great private worth; but if she never knows her own mind, nor when she is sick or well, such procedure gives a great shock to the nervous proprietor, and makes an audience very fretful, and on the manager in general their ill humour falls; and all bad tempers must give vent some way or another, and of course naturally falls on

* Mrs. S. Kemble was greatly received in London, in Miss Melville.

the dependent. She loves money, and would, I am assured, have obtained a great deal more, but for her plaguing herself as well as other people, and fretting and fuming at every trifle. How different in a theatre is Mrs. Siddons!—she never heeds trouble—if truly indisposed, and possible to rise from her bed, she is certain in her duty to the public. And, as I suppose I am not singular in receiving such kind behaviour, she is a treasure to enter into an engagement with, without adhering to the golden advantages she brings: For in her behaviour she is truly a nonpareil. As a proof—she has not known until she arrived at York, what play she was first to appear in, or what characters she was to act during a course of six plays. If a dress has not arrived in time by the carriers, she sometimes has asked what was to play such a night; never saying such a play will do better than another, or such a part would be too fatiguing, but is always ready to oblige. A good lesson for many great as well as little ladies to attend to.

Mrs. Robinson had only a few nights to play before she finished her engagement that season, 1786. Her last night was for her own benefit on Friday, June 16: She acted Horatia in the Roman Father; and in the farce the Irish Widow. The house, I am sorry to remark, was very inferior to that when she appeared in 1785, and to make the circumstance still more mortifying, who

should suddenly appear to make it additionally provoking, but Mrs. Jordan, attended by mamma and sister, on a tour to Edinburgh and Glasgow Theatres, as her trumpet had sounded to the North Pole, and excited offers of bewitching golden fire. I have remarked that no violent love or cordiality had subsisted between these two ladies. Mrs. Jordan, of course, after displaying herself in the upper-box, and making the gazers look at Mrs. Somebody, who but twelve months before was only held as Mrs. Nobody. That gratification being by her accomplished,—in the farce she kindly descended to come behind the scenes, and ask the manager and her old friends and acquaintance, in that part of the theatre, how they all did, and not without an additional grace of an alluring nod and smile, which had been purchased at the London market of fashion, during a whole winter's residence of good luck, fortune, and every thing that was enviable: So after the noble greeting and salutation to us all, THE JORDAN, after having been recognised by her old Leeds audience in profile, from the front-row of the balcony, determined on being viewed at full length; which (as the Fine Gentleman in "Lethe" observes) makes the gods look angry. But how could they be angry with their dearly beloved Jordan: In short, by slow degrees, she advanced so far on the stage, that at the fist-hold of

her sister's arm, she was at the very edge of the wing on the stage part; this was during the *small clothes* scene in the Irish Widow, in the last act of that farce: This enraged the widow Robinson to a degree, and it added to her anger of a bad benefit, when from the sample of the year before, she expected it to rise, not to fall off, which would naturally irritate any lady. But this said benefit, be it known to all men, was on a Friday, though not a *good* Friday. She, however, kept up her spirits to let the Jordan see how well she could act, and with a sneer, not the gentlest, darted a glance at the Jordan, insinuating,—“Can you act like this!” The other, with all the *non-chalance* of fashion, said a great deal without speaking ever a word,—for her gestures and pantomime action were inimitable; and as she leaned on her sister, she pointed at Widow Brady's buckles, then at her figure, next with a significant shrug that the whole was intolerable, and at last, after giving the torture in an elegant and truly significant manner, she gave her a last look, and turned away with the grandest contempt and hauteur. Now it may be asked, why did not I prevail on Mrs. Jordan to quit so improper a situation for herself, and cruel to a degree, as Mrs. Jordan's marks of disapprobation were of great consequence in the minds of men that year, though the effect might have been widely different the year before. But

in answer, it is probable my request would not have been complied with; for the manager she *had* looked up to, was no longer the man of terror or command, but *then* looked down upon, if he dared to assume authority: And another hidden reason might be the cause, had my desire of her quitting so very conspicuous a situation been complied with, it might not have given me the ill-natured satisfaction I enjoyed; for Mrs. Robinson had quarrelled with me violently the day before, and I love a little mischief,—’tis in my nature; and oh Nature! Nature! who can stop thy course. I felt for Mrs. Robinson, yet at the same time I immoderately chuckled at the mischief I witnessed going forward; and had I ventured to be the mediator, like Milton’s Chaos I should————

“————as umpire sat,

“And by decision more embroil’d the fray.”

“So, if that be a truth, why Mr. Wilkin-son, who do not like being vexed, do you not grow more pliant, from your own feelings?” Why it is a fair question, but it is a picture of life in general more than the reader will suppose, for all are made more or less of the same whimsical disposition, and I will take the hint as well as I can, and mend with all convenient speed; but it was in fact only retaliation: For Mrs. Robinson

had foretold that Mrs. Jordan would be back with me before twelve months were gone and over; and so far her gift of double-sight was verified; (so were the witches prophecies to Macbeth;) but not as either Mrs. Robinson or Mr. Wilkinson in so high a degree expected, for instead of the *suppliant*, she came splish, splash, dish, dash, to the Leeds play-house, and tossels dangling, &c.—Oh! it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality,—and in lieu of her asking me for an engagement, the case was greatly altered, for I was obliged to solicit the lady who formerly solicited me, and it was no more than a comic adventure between us three, like a party of pleasure at quadrille, where all should play and pay alike. Ay, but says Mrs. Robinson, you have made me at this game pay more than my share: Well, Mrs. Robinson, never mind it, I will pay two thirds at our next meeting to clear the debt; I am a rich man in that respect, and will treat most cheerfully and liberally: And I hope this nonsense will be read by the two ladies as I mean it whimsically, and for us all three to laugh at. And as what is vexatious at one time of life, with one sip of good-nature thrown in, and leaving out all spleen and gall, makes a real laugh and entertainment on retrospection; as such I give it, and as such hope it will be taken, and in palliation must hint, that a wiser head than mine, and a par-

ticular good friend at Hull, many years ago, dubb'd Wilkinson "One of God Almighty's Unaccountables."

I desired Mrs. Jordan to play one night only: She insisted playing on shares, half after 15l. to which I made not the least hesitation but complied with. A strange revolution! the identical lady to share the receipt of the night, who but nine months before received only 11. 11s. 6d. per week: Not that I expected much profit for Mrs. Jordan or myself; her having played four summers, and her last benefit quite neglected, made me imagine the Leeds audience was cloyed, and from the frequency of seeing her perform and the space so short, judged a decent appearance at the theatre would be the utmost her best efforts could produce: But on June 21, 1786, we tried the experiment, and allowing Mrs. Jordan every merit, yet to prove the power and magnetic force of fashion, her Country Girl and the Romp, of which (Romp) they had been almost satiated, excited an overflowing house before the play began; a circumstance at that time seldom seen at Leeds. The demand for places was so great, that seven rows of the pit were laid into the boxes to greet her return. What is to be said for these things! Why nothing—for it never was strange that the world should be whimsical.

About the time I am describing Mrs. Jordan, Miss Wilkinfon's last performance with me, was at Leeds, June the 2d, in Rosina, and I rejoice that a good husband and good advancement has rewarded her; and that Miss Wilkinfon has not only grown to be a Mountain, but that that Mountain has not brought forth a mouse, but in reality, has brought forth a Mountain!—O, the Wilkinfons, if that is the case, it must be granted are a wonderful breed, and like extraordinary cattle, should bear an exorbitant price.

I will here introduce Miss Margaret Farren, who returned to me for a fixed engagement. She had been from the time she had left me, in Scotland and in Ireland, and came greatly improved indeed: She acted Gillian in the "Quaker," and several singing characters and girls, and all with great credit. For her benefit at Leeds she played the Poor Soldier, and stood her ground so well, that it proved a strong card for her and the whole round. She was so clever as to pierce the heart of Mr. Knight, whom I soon perceived very assiduous and constantly attentive; which some time after ended, like a modern comedy, with marriage.

Mrs. S. Kemble recovered and stepped forth in Letitia Hardy; in which character she was and remains most excellent. By such addition, with Mrs. Iliff and Miss Farren's assistance, our female part of the operas was well performed.

But soft !—methinks I hear the SIDDONS on the road, sitting triumphant in her tragic car, to charm, rouze, and astonish our Yorkshire world, who were impatiently assembling from all quarters of our county to behold the wonder. It was in the assize-week at York, in July, 1786, that this very important engagement was to take place; and so much company of consequence and fashion I never saw at York: And that no time may be lost for my passenger to be there in time, we will suppose for a minute, that I am “The Devil upon two Sticks,” therefore pop I close the doors of the Leeds Theatre, and we spring into my air-balloon, and without the fear of disagreeable roads, any expence, dust, rain, drunken post-boys, or want of any vehicle, we are already safely set down at my house in Blakestreet, York; and as I have whipped my reader so expeditiously from Leeds to York, doff my hat and think I deserve half-a-crown for my quick driving.

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

